

Imago Exegetica

Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

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Imago Exegetica

Visual Images as Exegetical Instruments,

1400–1700

Edited by

Walter S. Melion, James Clifton,
and Michel Weemans

Emory University, Lovis Corinth Colloquium IV



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5. Maarten de Vos, *Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death*, center panel of the Triptych for the Oude Voetboog painted for the cathedral of Antwerp (1590). Oil on panel, 347 × 280 cm. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen. Image © IRPA-KIK, Brussels 968
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7. Jan Sadeler I after Maarten de Vos, *Christ Triumphant* (1580). Engraving, 20.5 × 16.5 cm. London, The British Museum. Image © The British Museum 976
8. Jan and Cornelis Floris, Etching, 30.6 × 20.5 cm., in *Veelderleij nieuwe inventien van antijckesche sepulturen* [...] (Antwerp, Hieronymus Cock: 1557). The British Museum. Image © The British Museum 979
9. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Glorification of the Eucharist* (ca. 1630–1632). Oil on wood, 71.1 × 48.3 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art 981
10. Jan Sadeler I, *Pietà Surrounded by Angels with Instruments of the Passion* (1575–1600). Engraving, 29.8 × 22.1 cm. London, The British Museum. Image © The British Museum 989

INTRODUCTION:
VISUAL EXEGESIS AND PIETER BRUEGEL'S *CHRIST
AND THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY*

Walter S. Melion

Exegesis in the Christian tradition involves the close reading of Scripture by a theologian trained to search out the divine truths it conveys. These truths are generally seen to operate within several 'registers of sense': the literal sense concerns the meanings that the author, as instrument of divine revelation, intends to communicate; the consequent sense, to be discerned by the exegete, complements the literal, but is inferred from it, often by analogy (either extensive – the application of the biblical passage to a new subject – or allusive – the adaptation of the biblical passage itself to a new meaning); the typical sense operates when biblical persons, objects, and events are construed not literally, but rather as figurative types of new truths to be manifest at a future time and place.¹ These new truths

N.B. The précis of the contributors' essays, to be found at the close of the "Introduction", were written with the collaboration of James Clifton. I am grateful to Michel Weemans for his careful reading of the text and many valuable insights.

¹ On the exegetical theory and practice in the Roman Catholic tradition, see Maas, A.J., "Exegesis", in Herbermann C.G. – Pace E.A. – Pallen C.B. – Shahan T.J. – Wynne J.J., S.J. (eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. (New York: 1907–1912) V 692–706. On the multiple senses of Scripture in patristic, Augustinian, and medieval exegesis, see Margerie B. de, S.J., *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse. II. Les premiers grands exégètes latins* (Paris: 1983); De Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse. III. Saint Augustin* (Paris: 1983); and De Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse. IV. L'Occident latin de Léon le Grand à Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris: 1990). On the canonical four senses – literal, allegorical, tropological, and analogical – see Lubac H. de, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. M. Sebanc – E.M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: 1998–2009), esp. I 225–267, 423–457, on the literal and spiritual meanings of Scripture, as analogized to the Old and New Testaments. On typology and the spiritual understanding of Scripture, see Lubac H. de, *Scripture in the Tradition*, trans. L. O'Neill (New York 1968; reprint, New York: 2000) 11–31; on typology as a form of historical thought rooted in the spiritual sense, see Ohly F., *Sensus Spiritualis: Studies in Medieval Significance and the Philology of Culture*, ed. S.P. Jaffe – trans. K.J. Northcott (Chicago – London: 2005) 31–67. On 'exegesis' and 'reflection' as complementary modes of biblical interpretation, especially as regards the exegetical usage of the Victorine school and its derivations, see Ocker C., *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: 2002) 15–30; on the distinction between literal and spiritual meaning in medieval signification and allegory, 31–48; on the conflation of literal and spiritual meaning in the reading of biblical images during the fourteenth century and later, 78–93; on the 'literal-historical', 'literal-non-historical', and 'figurative senses

are known as antitypes, by warrant of a famous proof text – 1 *Peter* 3:21; the types, on the other hand, are often called ‘shadows’ or ‘allegories’, and as subspecies of the typical sense, they may also be identified as ‘parables’, a form of symbolic usage licensed by Christ himself.² Subdivision of the antitype produces the three senses, or better, the triple sense elaborated by the Scholastics: a truth of faith is discovered allegorically; a divine favor is discovered anagogically; and a moral virtue is discovered tropologically. In reading Scripture, the exegete was expected to make use of authoritative sources: first, an approved text of the Bible, such as the Vulgate of Saint Jerome; second, the homiletic treatises and exegetical commentaries of the Church Fathers, both Greek and Latin; third, commentaries sanctioned by the Schools, such as the *Glossa ordinaria* of Walafrid Strabo and the *Glossa interlinearis* of Anselm of Laon;³ fourth, doctrinal compendia

of Scripture’, 93–106; and on Nicholas of Lyra’s conviction that two literal meanings are to be found in some biblical texts, 142–145. On the historical critical method in patristic and medieval exegesis, see Prior J.G., *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis* (Rome: 1999) 43–87, esp. 84–87. On the related problem of ‘emendation’ and ‘conjecture’ in text-critical, as opposed to exegetical methodology, see Krans J., *Beyond What’s Written: Erasmus and Beza as Conjectural Critics of the New Testament*, *New Testament Tools and Studies* 35 (Leiden – Boston: 2006).

² On types and antitypes as exegetical devices that harmonize the two testaments by means of analogical images, see Daniélou J., *Sacramentum futuri: études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: 1950); Lampe G.W.H. – Woolcombe K.J., *Essays on Typology* (Napierville: 1957); Daniélou J., *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. W. Hibberd (Westminster: 1960); Smith J., *A Priest Forever: A Study of Typology and Eschatology in Hebrews* (London: 1969); Anderson R., *Types in Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: 1978); Sabourin L., *The Bible and Christ: The Unity of the Two Testaments* (New York: 1980); Davidson R.M., *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures* (Berrien Springs: 1981); Goppelt L., *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. D.H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: 1982); Keener H.T., *Typology and English Medieval Literature* (New York: 1992); Julius C.-B., *Die ausgeführte Schrifttypologien bei Paulus* (Frankfurt am Main – New York: 1999); Rehm S., *Spiegel der Heilsgeschichte: Typologische Bildzyklen in der Glasmalerei des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Frankfurt am Main – New York: 1999); Malone P., *The Same as Christ Jesus: Gospel and Type* (London: 2000); Ostmeyer K.-H., *Taufe und Typos: Elemente und Theologie des Tauftypologien in 1. Korinthen 10 und 1. Petrus 3* (Tübingen: 2000); Seitz C.R., *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: 2001); and Baker D.L., *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Downers Grove: 2010).

³ On the spurious attribution of the *Glossae* to the monks Strabo of Fulda and Anselm of Laon, see Froehlich K., ‘The Printed Gloss’, in *Biblia Latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480–81*, 4 vols. (Turnhout: 1992) I, XII–XXVI, esp. XXIII. Strabo and Anselm are first identified as the primary and secondary authors in the Paris edition of 1590, sponsored by the theological faculty of Paris. On the origins of the *Glossa ordinaria* and its status as the pellucid ‘voice’ of Scripture, see Smith L., *The ‘Glossa Ordinaria’: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden – Boston: 2009).

such as the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas of Aquinas;⁴ and finally, specific interpretations promulgated by conciliar and papal decree.

Implicit in all three categories of sense, especially the typical, is the assumption that Scripture employs visual images, producing them verbally, which is to say, rhetorically, for the purpose of engaging the reader's (or auditor's) faculties of memory, imagination, and understanding. These faculties, having been aroused visually, are thus enlisted in the task at hand – the unfolding of scriptural meaning. The images may themselves be defined by reference to the various registers of sense: literal images portray biblical persons, objects, and events; consequent images are inferred from the literal by processes of analogy; typical images comprise both types and antitypes – the persons, objects, and events, now construed as visual figures of truths, favors, or virtues (that is, as prefigurations of allegorical, anagogical, and tropological antitypes) that resolve into focus once they are analogized to their typifying images. Recourse to exegetical images is ultimately justified by two scriptural proof texts – 2 *Corinthians* 4:4 and *Colossians* 1:15 – that famously designate Christ as the 'image of God' (*imago Dei*) and 'image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature' (*imago Dei invisibilis primogenitus omnis creaturae*), who in himself makes God visible and thereby licenses other images of the creator.

Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the theory and practice of exegesis proved responsive to three great developments that brought pressure to bear on the ways in which visual images were conceived, in their form and function, manner and meaning, as exegetical instruments and accordingly put to use. The first is the humanist philology that scrutinized the source texts, questioning if not quite displacing the singular authority of the Vulgate, reading the canonical books according to rules of rhetoric and dialectic codified by the Ancients, and situating biblical history and prophecy within their appropriate contexts – archaeological, geographical, and socio-cultural. The second is the proliferation of printed bibles, both Latin and vernacular, at the turn of the sixteenth century. Whether Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed, these publications were often illustrated, with the majority of images occurring in Pentateuch and the historical books of the Old Testament, in the *Psalms*, in the Gospels and *Acts*, and in *Revelation*. The third is the establishment of the major

⁴ On fifteenth-century adaptations of the Thomistic *sensus litteralis*, see Minnis A.J., "Fifteenth-Century Versions of Thomistic Literalism", in Lerner R.E. – Müller-Luckner E. (eds.), *Neue Richtungen in der hoch- und spätmittelalterlichen Bibelexegese*, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien 32 (Munich: 1996) 162–180.

reproductive print publishing houses in Antwerp, Lyon, Rome, and elsewhere around the mid-sixteenth century, and as a consequence, the rise in popularity of exegetical woodcuts and engravings, issued not as biblical illustrations, but as independent prints and print series.

Printed images served as vehicles for the introduction of novel exegetical formats: for example, they are often richly inscribed with scriptural tags and texts; in aggregate, these extracts cohere into a biblical intertext whose mutually discursive elements are read by way of the pictorial image to which they jointly attach.⁵ The prints also often contain scriptural paraphrases in prose or verse, or alternatively, exegetical prompts that invite various readings of the scriptural imagery. Moreover, the visual image can itself constitute a reading of Scripture: the picture then usurps the function of prompting the biblical interpretation. The advent of new kinds of text-image apparatus, such as the emblem book, at mid-century, further enriched and complicated the exegetical potential of scriptural imagery. Pioneered by Georgette de Montenay and Benito Arias Montano, the former Calvinist, the latter Roman Catholic, the scriptural emblem book places various types of image – historical, enigmatic, allegorical, paraphrastic – into conversation with various types of biblical text – citations, epigrams, and commentaries. The interaction of the emblem's verbal and visual components is dialogic, reciprocal, and polyvalent, and the emblematic readings of Scripture that ensue are frequently inventive and occasionally unorthodox. By the second half of the sixteenth century, a new format of Bible, consisting entirely of prints and print series that distill the Old and New Testaments into images, had been promulgated in Antwerp. The picture bible illustrates and at the same time interprets Scripture, following the canonical order, as established by Trent, Luther, or Calvin, and reducing the text proper to condensed and corollary biblical subscriptions.

Entitled *Imago exegetica: Visual Images as Exegetical Instruments, 1400–1700*, this volume of *Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture* consists of essays that pose questions about the relation between verbal and visual hermeneutics. Exegesis, as theologians and historians of art, religion, and literature, have come increasingly to acknowledge,

⁵ On prints as catalysts for new methods of image-based exegesis, see Melion W.S., "Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries", in Clifton J. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century* [exh. cat., Museum of Biblical Art, New York; Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta] (London – New York: 2009) 14–106, esp. 50–62.

was neither solely textual nor aniconic; on the contrary, following from Scripture itself, which is replete with verbal images and rhetorical figures, exegesis has traditionally utilized visual devices of all kinds. In turn, visual exegesis, since it concerns the most authoritative of texts, supplied a template for the interpretation of other kinds of significant text by means of images. Seen in this light, exegetical images prove crucial to understanding how meaning was constituted visually, not only in the sacred sphere but also in the secular, a proposition explored by several of our contributors.

In writing their essays, the authors were invited to address the following topics, at least implicitly. How and why were images used as instruments of scriptural interpretation between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries? Are the verbal images put forth in the Bible and other sacred texts, generative of the verbal images utilized by exegetes and other interpreters of Scripture? How did pictorial images come to complement or substitute for these verbally produced images? How and why were images of various kinds seen to function as legitimate or even privileged means of scriptural understanding within systems of visual exegesis that operate in tandem with sacred texts, or alternatively, invoke or replace the absent text? What was the theology of the image that allowed it to mediate the exegete's access to scriptural truth? And how were these mediating devices accommodated to lay practices of scriptural engagement? In addition, with specific reference to the Christian tradition, the contributors were urged to ponder various collateral issues: the appearance of new categories of biblical subject, not previously illustrated, in the early modern period; the introduction of new systems of analogy and typology, complementary or alternative to the canons of visual exegesis codified in manuscripts and incunabula such as the *Biblia pauperum* (*Poor-Man's Bible*), the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (*Mirror of Human Salvation*), and the *Historia scholastica* (*Scholastic History*);⁶ the paratextual and commentatorial status

⁶ On the *Biblia pauperum*, see Engelhardt H., *Der theologische Gehalt der 'Biblia pauperum'*, Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte 243 (Strassburg: 1927); Schmidt G., *Die Armenbibeln des XIV. Jahrhunderts*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 19 (Graz – Cologne: 1959); Berve M., *Die Armenbibel: Herkunft, Gestalt, Typologie* (Beuron: 1969) 7–25; Labriola A.C. – Smeltz J.W., *The Bible of the Poor [Biblia Pauperum]: A Facsimile and Edition of the British Library Blockbook C.9 d.2* (Pittsburgh: 1990) 3–10; and Henry A., *Biblia pauperum: A Facsimile and Edition* (Ithaca: n.d. [1987]) 3–46. On the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, see Breitenbach E., *Speculum humanae salvationis: Eine typengeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Strassburg: 1930); Wilson A. – Lancaster Wilson J., *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324–1500* (Berkeley: 1984); and Labriola A.C. – Smeltz J.W., *The Mirror of Salvation [Speculum Humanae Salvationis]: An Edition of British Library Blockbook H. 11784* (Pittsburgh: 2002) 1–8. On the *Historia scholastica*, see Seybolt R.F., “The *Legenda Aurea*,

of printed images in Latin and vernacular bibles published after the late fifteenth century, and related to this, the jointly illustrative and exegetical status of the printed images published in picture bibles after the late sixteenth century; the distinctive forms and functions taken by scriptural images within new literary genres such as the exegetical emblem book; and the application of visual exegesis as a method of meditative spiritual exercise leading to the formation and reformation of the soul. Finally, they were also encouraged to consider how exegetical methods of interpretation came to operate more widely, having been adapted and simplified for the educated laity. How did exegetical practices inform the viewing of semireligious and secular images made for private or public consumption?

Little attention has been paid to the relation between scriptural images and the exegetical images that facilitated scriptural interpretation, to the manner in which verbal images entered into the argument of exegetical homilies, paraphrases, and commentaries, or to the image-theory that undergird verbal and visual methods of exegesis.⁷ And nor has the early modern transition from verbal practices of exegetical image-making to visual practices based in pictorial print media been sufficiently examined. Likewise, the expansion of exegetical activity from a strictly delimited community of churchmen and theologians, to more loosely constituted communities of biblically literate laymen, including learned artisans, such as the printmaker and stained-glass painter Dirk Vellert (ca. 1480–ca. 1547) and the master painter, draftsman, and print designer Pieter Bruegel (ca. 1525–1569), requires more sustained consideration. Let us therefore examine Bruegel's celebrated grisaille, *Christ and the Woman*

Bible, and *Historia Scholastica*", *Speculum* 21 (1946) 339–342; Hindman S., "Fifteenth-Century Dutch Bible Illustration and the *Historia Scholastica*", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974) 131–144; and Morey J.H., "Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible", *Speculum* 68 (1993) 6–35.

⁷ Most recently, on visual typology as an instrument exegetical interpretation, see Falkenburg R., *The Land of Unlikeness: Hieronymus Bosch, "The Garden of Early Delights"* (Zwolle: 2011) 66–81 and *passim*. On the exegetical form, function, and meaning of landscape imagery, see Ribouillault D. – Weemans M. (eds.), *Le paysage sacré. Le paysage comme exégèse dans l'Europe de la première modernité* (Florence: 2011); Weemans M., "Le paysage monde comme pérégrination spirituelle et exégèse visuelle", in Tapié A. – Weemans M. (eds.), *Fables du paysage flamand: Bosch, Bles, Brueghel, Bril* [exh. cat., Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille] (Paris – Lille: 2012) 76–83; and Melion W.S., "'Conspicitur prior usque fulgor': On the Functions of Landscape in Benito Arias Montano's *Humanae salutis monumenta* (1571)", *Emblematica* 20 (2013), forthcoming.

Taken in Adultery of 1565, in order better to understand how exegetical analogies are embedded within his biblical composition [Fig. 1].⁸

Bruegel illustrates the episode recounted in *John* 8:3–11: the scribes and Pharisees, hoping legally to confound Christ, bring before him a woman taken in adultery, whom the law of Moses (*Leviticus* 20:10) condemns to be stoned. Their expectation is that Christ, who is sitting in the Temple and teaching, will attempt to contravene the law and thus himself become liable to censure and condemnation. Instead, 'Jesus bowing himself down, [writes] with his finger on the ground', and only when they fail to grasp his written response, does he '[lift] himself up' and say to them: 'He that



Fig. 1. Pieter Bruegel, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* (1565). Oil on panel, 24.1 × 34.4 cm. London, Courtauld Institute of Art, Seilern Collection.

⁸ On Bruegel's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, see Grossman F., "Bruegel's 'Woman Taken in Adultery' and Other Grisailles", *The Burlington Magazine* 94 (1952) 218–229; Gibson W.S., *Bruegel* (London: 1977) 134–139; Marijnissen R.H. – Ruyffelaere P. – Calster P. van – Meij A.W.F.M., *Bruegel: Tout l'oeuvre peint et dessiné* (Antwerp: 1988) 288–289; Robert-Jones P., *Pieter Bruegel* (New York: 2002) 138–139; Sellink M., *Bruegel: The Complete Paintings, Drawings, and Prints* (Ghent: 2007) 214; and Jonckheere K., *Antwerp Art after Iconoclasm: Experiments in Decorum, 1566–1585* (Brussels: 2012) 206–209, which cogently argues that Bruegel's grisaille comments on the relation between hypocrisy and iconoclasm.

is without sin amongst you, let him first cast a stone at her'.⁹ He then 'stoops[s] down' once again and continues writing on the ground until the accusers, realizing that they themselves are the accused, depart 'one by one, beginning at the eldest'.

Bent down at the front of the image, his silhouetted torso and backside made voluminous by the fall of his loosely draped robe, Christ is shown writing the opening words of the admonition to the scribes and Pharisees: 'He that is without sin, let him [...]' ('Die sonder sonde is, die V [...]'). He may be seen to have humbled himself, unlike the adulterous woman's prideful plaintiffs, not only in refusing to accuse in the manner of her self-appointed judges, but also in assuming an attitude that places his head at waist-height and the bulk of his body beneath that of every other bystander. This attitude, in that it gives greater prominence to Christ's buttocks than face, appears surprising, even indecorous, and in this sense underscores the theme of self-abasement. That he is closer to her than any of the surrounding onlookers, all of whom have distanced themselves, emphasizes that in positioning himself below a mere sinner, Christ yet attaches himself to the sinful woman, deigning to incur with her the people's scorn and reproach. Various compositional devices further enhance the clear reference to his exemplary humility: it is the penitent woman, not he, who occupies the center of the picture (marked by the intersection of its diagonal axes), and who aligns with the central vertical axis; and her head, not his, overtops those of the other figures, many of whom have already begun to slink away. Bruegel invites the viewer's identification with Christ by placing our vantage point at the level of his eyes: we look down at the text he is inscribing, and up at the faces of the crowd, followers at left, detractors at right. Amongst the latter, the bearded Pharisee at the extreme right carries a book in a bag hanging from his waist. This book, along with the pseudo-Hebraic letters embroidered on the hem of his tunic, identifies him as a man who cleaves to the letter of the law, rather than espousing the Gospel.

As Manfred Sellink has recently observed, Bruegel cleaves very closely to the pericope he illustrates.¹⁰ However, he also incorporates proleptic references to two key elements of the doctrinal disquisition that immediately follows his encounter with the adulteress. First, he alludes to the

⁹ John 8:6–7, in *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, ed. R. Challoner (Baltimore: 1899; reprint, Rockford: 1971). Unless otherwise noted, biblical citations come from this edition.

¹⁰ Sellink, *Bruegel* 214.

revelatory statement with which Christ resumes teaching in the Temple, after the irruption of scribes and Pharisees has been deflected: ‘Again therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life”’.¹¹ The grisaille technique, since it entirely relies on tonal variation to articulate forms, heightens the viewer’s attention to effects of light and shadow, and by extension, to the thematic of spiritual illumination and obumbration. The upper expanse of Christ’s robe, its smooth surface brightly lit from shoulder to waist, causes him to shine amidst the crowd of penumbral figures, some of whom crane forward better to see what he has written, while others fade stealthily into the shadows. The brightness of Christ serves as analogue to the imagery of light that he utilizes in *John* 8:12 to declare his Messianic identity. The *Glossa* provides a further warrant for the light effects foregrounded in the grisaille: the glossarist avers, with reference to *John* 8, that Christ taught in the Temple at dawn to signify that his merciful doctrine supersedes the shadows of the law, like the rising of a new light (‘mane est ortus novae lucis post tenebras legis’).¹²

Second, the image’s paradoxical combination of references to the extreme humility of Christ (his bending low beside the penitent adulteress) and to his divine eminence (the brilliant light that singles him out), forecasts the equally paradoxical image of theophany and self-sacrifice put forward by him in *John* 8:28, his prophecy of the Crucifixion: ‘Jesus therefore said to them, “When you shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know, that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me, these things I speak”’. This passage, along with *John* 3:14 – ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up’ – asserts that Christ, howsoever bruised and battered in his humanity, shall broadcast his divinity incontrovertibly, once he is fastened to the cross and raised up for all to see. Augustine famously makes this point in *Tractate 40 on the Gospel of John* 8:28–32, and his exegetical arguments, later distilled and disseminated in the *Glossa*, achieved wide currency.¹³ He plays upon the double meaning of the verb

¹¹ *John* 8:12.

¹² *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria, primum quidem a Strabo Fuldensi Monacho Benedictino collecta [...] et Postilla Nicolai Lirani Franciscani, necnon additionibus Pauli Burgen-sis Episcopi, & Matthiae Thoringi replicis, opera et studio theologorum Duacensium*, 4 vols. (Antwerp, Jan van Keerbergen: 1617) V, col. 1152.

¹³ Augustine A., *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 28–54, eds. Halton T.P. – Clark E., et al., trans. J.W. Rettig, *Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* 88 (Washington, D.C.: 1993) 124–134, esp. 124–126.

'exalto' (to raise, elevate, but also to deepen, extend down) and the noun 'exaltatio' (exaltation in the literal sense of lifting up and the figurative sense of glorifying or magnifying): raised upon the cross, his body hanging pendant, Christ was jointly exalted as redeemer, for the very same people who had crucified him would soon be converted into his followers, their sins having been forgiven by the saving power of his sacrifice.¹⁴ In prophesying his Crucifixion, Jesus hereby affirms his divine authority, for he implicitly demonstrates before the fact, as it were, that no sinner is so wicked, that he may not pardon him, no sin so heinous that he may not forgive it. Indeed, the phrase 'I am he' signifies that his being is immutable, divine in substance, and proceeds from the Father.¹⁵ Augustine, as Nicholas of Lyra infers in his postils to the *Glossa*, reads *John* 8:28 by way of *Philippians* 2:7–10; Paul here construes the humiliation of the crucified Christ as the cause of his exaltation in the eyes of God: 'He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names'.¹⁶

The pictorial devices that Bruegel utilizes to adumbrate key points from the sermon of Christ, prompt us to examine the episode recounted in *John* 8:3–11, his handling of the adulterous woman, by reference to *John* 8:12 and 8:28, the meaning of which the grisaille may be thought to exemplify. The image, in other words, mobilizes one set of scriptural passages to read the event described in another. The challenge the artist poses for the biblically literate viewer is like the challenge posed by Christ for his beholders: what he does and what he writes are given to be observed and interpreted as evidence of his divine and human condition, of his merciful doctrine that illuminates spiritually, and of his new way of dealing that supplants the strictures of the law. Bruegel was licensed to treat *John* 8:3–11 in this way – which is to say, exegetically – because one of the most canonical of all exegetical compendia, the *Glossa ordinaria*, describes Christ's encounter with the adulteress, and his altercation with the scribes and Pharisees, as if these were performative events discharged by Christ himself for the purpose of producing an exegetical effect.

¹⁴ Ibidem V, col. 1151: 'Exaltationem autem crucis dicit, quia & ibi exaltatus est quando pependit in ligno, hoc oportebat impleri per manus eorum qui postea fuerant credituri, qui bonus dicit hoc, quare nisi ut nemo in quocumque scelere, & male sibi conscius desperaret, quando videat eis donari homicidium qui occiderant Christum'.

¹⁵ Ibidem: 'Esse est immutabile divinae substantiae. Sed ne ipse qui loquitur, intelligeretur esse pater'.

¹⁶ *Philippians* 2:8.

The *Glossa* codified the notion that Christ, in his handling of the adulteress and her accusers, was purveying an exegetical image – typological in form and function – of the new law he strove to promulgate and preserve in place of the old ('ipse custos legis est & lator legis').¹⁷ To paraphrase: as the finger of God inscribed the tablets of Moses, writing the law upon stones hard as the hearts of the people God wished to regulate ('digito Dei scripta fuit lex in lapide pro duricia illius populi'), so now Jesus, who is God made man, bends down to write upon the soft earth, inducing it to bear spiritual fruit ('nunc iam inclinatus in homine [...] scribens in terram quae fructum reddit').¹⁸ The *Glossa* thus urges us to visualize this scene as an enacted antitype, an exegetical image that marks *John* 8:3–11 (especially 8:6–8) as the fulfillment of *Exodus* 31:18. The conviction that a Mosaic type underlies this antitype derives from the crucial distinction between law and grace adduced in *John* 1:14 and 1:17, which characterize the mystery of the Incarnation as a process that brings an image to light; something never before seen by human eyes is rendered newly visible – the grace and truth of God heretofore obscured by the law: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. [...] For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ'.

The circumstances under which the 'two stone tables of testimony, written with the finger of God' were handed to Moses – atop Mount Sinai, wreathed in flames and veiled in smoke, barely perceptible to the fearful people watching from below – implicitly contrast with the circumstances that now obtain: whereas the people formerly stood far beneath Moses, Jesus instead positions himself beneath the nearby onlookers; whereas God interacted with Moses from on high, his fearful voice distant yet audible to the Israelites, his divine majesty signalled but also hidden by fire and smoke, Jesus instead crouches down and thereby epitomizes the virtue of humility, giving himself as an exemplum to be seen, and framing his response as a written text to be read.¹⁹ Having been accosted, he at first remains silent, admonishing his audience not aurally but visually, and resorting to speech only after they fail to comprehend the tableau vivant he has enacted: 'When therefore they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said to them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first

¹⁷ *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria* V, col. 1153.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ On the manifestation of the Lord in thunder, lighting, smoke, and trumpet blasts atop Mount Sinai, see *Exodus* 19:16–19.

cast a stone at her”.²⁰ And having thus answered, he then resumes his former attitude and continues writing.

There is another sense in which *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* may be identified as exegetical. As Nicholas of Lyra declares with regard to the story's protagonists, the scribes were expert in scripture ('illi qui habebant noticiam scripturarum') – that is, exegetes – who used their knowledge falsely and foolishly to confute Christ ('hic consequenter ponitur confutatio falsitatis').²¹ The scribe wearing a version of a scholar's cap, who leans over and harangues him, gesturing disputatiously, is one such exegete, whose words Christ counters with the exegetical image comprised by his action of lowering himself to write. He looks at the stones lying at the scribe's feet, rather than directly at him, as if to indicate that his interlocutors, in their hearts, are hard as stones; Bruegel subtly intimates that their attachment to the law issues from the 'duricia illius populi', to quote from the *Glossa* and its rendering of a Mosaic type.²² By the same token, the scribe seems poised to reach for the stones, in fulfillment of the punishment prescribed in *Leviticus* 20:10 and *Deuteronomy* 17:7, and contravened by the admonition that Jesus traces *in terram* rather than *in lapide*.²³

The *Glossa*, more precisely, Nicholas of Lyra's postils to the ordinary glosses, delineate an alternative reading of Christ's silent riposte that helps to explain a key feature of Bruegel's grisaille – the sign of the cross made by the adulteress with the thumbs and index fingers of her clasped hands. Her pious gesture is made all the more conspicuous by the relative scarcity of hand gestures elsewhere in the picture. The Pharisee at far right, for example, has tucked his hands beneath his tabard, and most of the other figures' hands are placed out of sight. Bruegel counterposes Christ and the adulteress to the Pharisee and the scribe, the only other brightly lit figures. Like Jesus, who bends over and points, so too does the scribe: his mouth open and hands fluttering, he remonstrates with the Lord, loudly contesting what has been silently written. His palms, pivoting at the wrists and crossed at a right angle, perhaps signify the scribe's intention of 'crossing' Jesus, in the sense of contravening his teaching (from one of the meanings of 'cruce', a cognate of the Latin

²⁰ *John* 8:7.

²¹ *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria* V, col. 1153.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ Alternatively, the scribe may be thought to have let go of the stone lying just below his loosened grasp.

‘cruciare’ – ‘to afflict’, ‘to trouble grievously’).²⁴ The scribe’s crossed palms would seem to signal his desire to oppose and ultimately crucify the Lord. Just as the woman looks down at what Christ is writing, so too does the Pharisee to the scribe’s right, but whereas she reacts by making the sign of the cross, he hides his hands, as if purposely refusing to ‘grasp’ the import of the *doctrina Christi*. The book he carries, along with the pseudo-Hebraic letters embroidered on the hem of his robe, signify that he lives according to the letter of the law, whereas the partial text inscribed by Christ, its final words still to be written, indicates that the Gospel is more open-ended. It imposes the requirement of interpretative agency on all potential followers of Christ, who are compelled, on the model of the penitent adulteress (and counter-model of the Pharisee and the scribe), to attend to his meaningful words and deeds, to bring to completion his unfinished admonition, and more than this, fully to apprehend the message he both enacts and transcribes. One might put this as follows: by juxtaposing Christ and the adulterous woman to the Pharisee and scribe, Bruegel is staging a call for exegetical engagement, urging his audience (including us, of course) to make a moral and spiritual choice between the founder of the New Law and the representatives of the Old. Rather than merely parroting the Old, we must strive to interpret the New, bringing our eyes, mind, and heart to bear as we set about this task.

The reading of one event from the life of Christ onto another, as we shall see, is an exegetical exercise that was richly elaborated by Erasmus in his *Paraphrase on the Gospel of John* (Basel, Froben: 1523, 1524, 1534, 1535) and the *Adages* (Basel, Froben: 1517/18, 1528, 1530, 1533, 1536). The woman’s gesture connotes penitence, as well as adherence to the new law founded by Christ, and concomitantly, it testifies in advance to her belief in the forgiveness of sin; but it also calls to mind, both literally and figuratively, the way of the cross that Christ must endure in order to redeem the burden of original sin. Moreover, the woman’s attitude, downward glance, and position beside the hunched figure of Christ recall images of Veronica keeping vigil with Christ on the road to Calvary. In Martin Schongauer’s *Carrying of the Cross* (ca. 1470–1474), for example, Veronica stands a few paces beyond the fallen Christ, her veil held ready, her forearms crossed in

²⁴ On the verb ‘crucen’, in the sense of ‘pijnigen’ or ‘martelen’, see Verdam J., *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek*, ed. C.H. Ebbinge Wubben (The Hague: 1932; reprint, The Hague: 1981) 315; and Heinsius J. (ed.), *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, Vol. 8, Pt. 1 (The Hague – Leiden: 1916), col. 450.

sympathy with his plight [Fig. 2].²⁵ Her pose reverses that of the adulteress, but is similarly rotational, and her face likewise expresses sorrowful resignation. Fallen beneath the weight of the cross, his left arm extended, his left hand pressed downward, Schongauer's Christ closely resembles, in mirror reversal, Bruegel's: just as the former kneels at the foot of a hummock, so in the grisaille, Christ genuflects at the edge of the podium that supports the adulteress, scribes, and Pharisees. In truth, his pose presages the one he takes in the *Carrying of the Cross*, painted the year before, in 1564: there too his torso is bent forward, one arm is extended, one hand touches the ground, and his gaze is earthbound [Fig. 3].²⁶ The silhouette of Christ is virtually identical in the two panels, as if his action in the grisaille were a *typus*, a foreshadowing, of the event enacted on the road to Calvary. In addition, the silhouetted scribe who accosts Christ at right, approximates in pose, profile, and headgear the profile figure fifth from the right in Schongauer's print, who like his painted counterpart bends forward and gesticulates with his left hand. These similarities suggest that Bruegel consulted Schongauer as his prime source, and more importantly, that he encoded into his version of *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* an allusion to the Passion, and specifically, to the carrying of the cross.²⁷

²⁵ On Schongauer's *Carrying of the Cross*, see Minott C.I., *Martin Schongauer* (New York: 1971) 40–42; Châtelet A., "Les gravures de Martin Schongauer", in Widerkehr L. – Anzelewsky F. – Bégurier P., et al., *Le beau Martin. Gravures et dessins de Martin Schongauer (vers 1450–1491)* [exh. cat., Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar] (Colmar: 1991) 239–425, esp. 366–369, no. G83; Renouard de Bussière S., *Martin Schongauer. Maître de la gravure Rhénane vers 1450–1491* [exh. cat., Musée du Petit Palais, Paris] (Paris: 1991) 120–125, no. 13; and Landau D. – Parshall P., *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550* (New Haven – London: 1994) 53.

²⁶ On Bruegel's *Carrying of the Cross*, see Gibson, *Bruegel* 123–133; Demus K. – Klauner F. – Schütz K., *Flämische Malerei von Jan van Eyck bis Pieter Bruegel* (Vienna: 1981) 81–86; Marijnissen, *Bruegel* 223–232; Falkenburg R.L., "Pieter Bruegels *Kruisdragging*: Een proeve van Close-Reading", *Oud Holland* 107 (1993) 17–33; Gregory J.E., "Towards the Contextualization of Pieter Bruegel's *Procession to Calvary*: Constructing the Beholder from within the Eyckian Tradition", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (1996) 207–221; Meadow M., "Bruegel's *Procession to Calvary*: Aemulatio and the Space of Vernacular Style", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (1996) 181–205; Seipel W., et al., *Pieter Bruegel the Elder at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna* (Milan: 1998) 68–83; Müller J., *Das Paradox als Bildform: Studien zur Ikonologie Pieter Bruegel d.Ä.* (Munich: 1999) 136–142; Roberts-Jones P. – Roberts-Jones F., *Pieter Bruegel* (New York: 2002) 36–44; and Sellink, *Bruegel* 191–193.

²⁷ Falkenburg, in *Land of Unlikeness* 71–75, describes a similar example of implied doubling, in which the pose of Adam, with legs extended and feet crossed beneath the figure of Christ the Word (in the *Paradise* wing of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*), represents the crucifixion of the New Adam, whose self-sacrifice shall spiritually remarry fallen humankind to its *Sponsus-Artifex*.



Fig. 2. Martin Schongauer, *Carrying of the Cross* (1470–1474). Engraving, 29.1 × 43.2 cm. London, British Museum AN45842001.



Fig. 3. Pieter Bruegel, *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1564). Oil on panel, 124 × 170 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Inv. 1025.

The *Glossa* justifies this layering of episodes from the ministry and Passion of Christ. Nicholas of Lyra, in his postil to the ordinary gloss on *John* 8:8, 'And again stooping down, he wrote on the ground', argues that Christ, when he first crouched down, wrote the line he thereafter spoke, 'He that is without sin [...]'; but when he crouched a second time, he chose instead to transcribe the sins of the woman's self-righteous judges: 'Some say that to strengthen his admonition, he wrote what he had written before. Others say, and more justly, that he seems to have transcribed the sins [of the scribes and Pharisees], in order to demonstrate that in their accusation of this woman, they were injudicious'.²⁸ Nicholas of Lyra's implication is that Christ bends down ('se inclinans') to engage with human sin, that the accusers' many transgressions, if they are fully to be exposed, oblige him to lower himself, as if bearing down on him. The analogy to the bearing of the cross, borne as the wages of sin, is made explicit in the postil to the ordinary gloss on *John* 8:28, 'When you shall have lifted up the Son of man [...]', which states unequivocally that what Christ means to evoke in his sermon is the cross he shall inevitably endure ('scilicet, in cruce').²⁹ Layered upon this reading of *John* 8:28, Nicholas of Lyra's reference to *Philippians* 2:7–10 connects the cross to the Isaian imagery of Christ humbling himself in the manner of a servant, and to the antithetical imagery of his heavenly glorification: 'But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men [...]. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow'.³⁰

Adapted from Schongauer's celebrated engraving, Bruegel's portrayal of Christ bent low like a servant before lesser men than he, and yet shining brightly, would seem to function as an exegetical type: the event it foreshadows, the carrying of the cross (*John* 19:17), profoundly humbles its bearer, even as it glorifies him as the light of the world. Based in the *Glossa*, the analogy between *John* 8:3–11 and *John* 19:17 was further elaborated and popularized by Erasmus in the *Paraphrase on John*.³¹ In paraphrasing the

²⁸ *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria* V, col. 1154: 'Dicunt aliqui, quod scribebat idem quod prius ad ostendendum maiorem firmitatem sententiae. Alij dicunt & melius, ut videtur quod scribebat eorum peccata; ut eos ostenderet ineptos ad accusationem huius foeminae'.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, col. 1151: 'Scilicet, in cruce, in qua fuit extensus in aere, & per quod exaltatus est a patre, secundum quod dicitur Philipp. 2.b'.

³⁰ *Philippians* 2:7 and 2:10.

³¹ On Erasmus's *Paraphrase on John*, see Rabil A., Jr., "Erasmus' *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John*", *Church History* 48 (1979) 142–155; on paraphrasis as an exegetical instrument and its basis in the historical imagination, see Vessey M., "Introduction", in Pabel H.M. – Vessey M. (eds.), *Holy Scripture Speaks: The Production and Reception of Erasmus' Paraphrases on the*

Gospels, *Acts*, and Epistles, Erasmus relied heavily on rhetorical figures that aid the process of visualization by amplifying upon the sparser images provided by Scripture. Detailed, affective, and memorable, his paraphrastic imagery offered guidance to lay readers of the Bible, helping them to discern the meanings latent in the words and actions of Christ and the apostles. Consequently, as Michel Weemans has shown with reference to Herri met de Bles, the *Paraphrases* served as a valuable visual exegetical source for artists such as Bruegel, whose *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* closely aligns with Erasmus's account of *John* 8:3–11, 8:12, and 8:28.³²

Erasmus states explicitly that Christ, in his merciful treatment of the adulteress and humbly silent refutation of the scribes and Pharisees, was picturing for his viewers the nature of his relation to the law of Moses.³³ Exposing the law's imperfection, he fashioned himself into a living image of the law's completion: since 'the law only penalizes public crimes', but fails to expose the far greater but often secret crimes of 'arrogance, disdain, envy, [and] hatred', Jesus silently reproves the woman's accusers by reacting humbly rather than proudly, mildly rather than viciously, thus disclosing their malevolence.³⁴ For Erasmus, in other words, the encounter with the adulteress is a visual antitype that operates both locally and categorically, for it is seen to fulfill what the genre of the Mosaic type can only partially or defectively presage. Jesus acknowledges and accommodates

New Testament' (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 2002) 3–25; Vessey, "The Tongue and the Book: Erasmus' *Paraphrases on the New Testament* and the Arts of Scripture", in *ibidem* 29–58; Roussel B., "Exegetical Fictions? Biblical Paraphrases of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in *ibidem* 59–83; and Sider R.D., "Historical Imagination and the Representation of Paul in Erasmus' *Paraphrases on the Pauline Epistles*", in *ibidem* 85–109. On the rhetorical effects mustered by Erasmus in the *Paraphrases*, including vividness of representation, see Bateman J.J., "From Soul to Soul: Persuasion in Erasmus' *Paraphrases on the New Testament*", *Erasmus in English* 15 (1987–1988) 7–16.

³² Weemans M., "Herri met de Bles's *Way to Calvary*: A Silenic Landscape", *Art History* 32 (2009) 307–331, esp. 308–312.

³³ Erasmus Desiderius, *D. Erasmi Roterodami paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Ioannem* (Basil, Johann Froben: 1524) 94: 'Hoc aculeo animis illorum iniecto, rursus inclinatus scribebat in terra, facto suo depingens, quid ab illis vellet fieri'. Erasmus is referring to the image restaged by Christ when he bows down a second time. As regards his initial decision to respond visually rather than verbally, Erasmus states that the action of Christ was more eloquent than speech; see *ibidem* 93: 'Oratione nihil respondit, sed ipso facto plus loquebatur'.

³⁴ Sider R.D. (ed.) – Phillips J.E. (trans. – annot.), *Collected Works of Erasmus: New Testament Scholarship – Paraphrase on John* (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 1991) 105. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 92.

the full complexity of the human condition that the law can only discount or regulate: 'But Jesus knew the secrets of human hearts, and nothing at all, no matter how hidden, escaped his awareness. [...] Yet he did not declare her innocent, lest he seem to abolish the law of Moses, necessarily applied to the control of wrongdoers, for he had come to complete the law, not abolish it. Nor did he declare her guilty, because he had come into the world not to destroy sinners, but to save them'.³⁵

Erasmus repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus reproves the scribes and Pharisees not verbally but visually. As he puts it: '[Jesus] did not answer in words, but he said more by his very act' ('ipso facto plus loquebatur').³⁶ He 'displayed the mercy of the gospel law' ('ostendit evangelicae legis [...] clementiam'), 'teaching us in this very act' ('hac ipsa re nos docens') that each person must stoop down and 'put off the disdain and haughtiness with which he flatters himself and in pride of heart looks down on his neighbor'. On the contrary, it is necessary that he 'sink down within [himself]', and like all true followers of Christ, penitently consider the 'deed portraying what he wanted done by them' ('facto suo depingens, quid ab illis vellet fieri').³⁷ Turning away from the external concerns of the Mosaic law, he must grapple internally with the matters of conscience that are the purview of the spiritual gospel law ('ut in se descenderent').³⁸ If terms and phrases such as *ipso facto*, *depingens*, and *hac ipsa re nos docens* indicate that Christ here teaches by means of the admonitory image he himself bodies forth, the complementary call to follow Christ in judging 'according to the spirit' insists that the image he purveys must be parsed exegetically, its true meaning taken to heart: 'For that cannot be seen except when wicked desires have been removed and hearts judge according to the spirit, and when, from the things I do and say and from comparison with the sayings of the prophets, minds that are willing to believe see that the matter is a heavenly one, not a human one'.³⁹ Erasmus

³⁵ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 105. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 93.

³⁶ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 106. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 93.

³⁷ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 106. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 93–94.

³⁸ Ibidem 93: 'Admonebat illos, qui ream ad poenam crudelem pertrahebant, ut in se descenderent, & iuxta divinam legem suam excuterent conscientiam'.

³⁹ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 109; also see ibidem 110: '[...] for the Son is not known by physical eyes but by faith, and the Father cannot be shown to human senses, but spiritually winds his way into devout hearts'. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 96–97. This and other allusions to spiritual sight derive

is arguing that the paraphrastic image of Christ's encounter with the adulteress, scribes, and Pharisees must be viewed in light of the oracles prophesying his words and deeds, and in conjunction with analogous scriptural passages recounting his Passion. This reads like an appeal for the kind of exegetical image Bruegel has produced, the meaning of which hinges on discerning what the recalcitrant scribes and Pharisees fail to see, namely, that Christ is enacting the Isaian imagery of the servant (*Isaiah* 42:1–4, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, and 52:13–53:12) and prefiguring the evangelical imagery of the carrying of the cross.

Erasmus treats *John* 8 as an integrated whole: the altercation with the woman's persecutors is presented as one phase of a continuous sermon preached in the treasury of the Temple in Jerusalem. As Erasmus puts it: 'So with the informers sent away and each one's crimes revealed to him and the sinning woman let go, Jesus used this incident to develop the conversation he had begun earlier'.⁴⁰ The many references to cross and crucifixion that punctuate the sermon (especially *John* 8:21, 'Whither I go, you cannot come', and 8:28, 'When you shall have lifted up the Son of man [...]') attach to the events narrated in *John* 8:3–11, as if they were altogether correlative. Erasmus thus encourages us to infer that the meekness and mercy displayed by Jesus are correspondent to the virtues he exemplified when he bore the cross on the road to Calvary, ultimately to be borne upon it: "I do not go where your wickedness impels me, but I go willingly to a place where you cannot follow" (*John* 8:21). Our Lord Jesus hinted at much in this puzzling statement: first, that he would go to his death of his own free will; and then that through his death and resurrection he would be brought into heaven, where no one who is wise in the world's sense can be brought'.⁴¹

For Erasmus, nearly everything the Lord Jesus says and does in *John* 8, every image he brings to eyes and mind, has to do with the cross he shall bear ineluctably. The Jews cannot look past his humanity, and so they (unlike us) fail to ascertain that even now, as he stoops at their feet, he is

from the *Glossa*, which interprets *John* 8:12 and much of what precedes and follows it as an adjuration to see the light of Christ in *spiritualibus* rather than in *corporalibus*; see *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria* V, col. 1155: 'Lux enim magis proprie dicitur in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, quia lux habet rationem manifestativi, quod proprie habet locum in cognitione intellectiva'.

⁴⁰ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 107. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 95.

⁴¹ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 111. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 97–98.

fulfilling 'everything that the prophets had written about Jesus', and foretelling the 'completion of that ultimate sacrifice on the altar of the cross for the salvation of the world'.⁴² What he teaches, whether it is transmitted visually or verbally, must be compared to other scriptural loci that prophesy his advent, ministry, and Passion, fulfill the things his words and deeds have foretold, or enshrine his further teachings. To the extent that the episode with the adulteress visualizes key points of doctrine, it must be unfolded by means of collation with the *philosophia Christi* housed elsewhere in Gospels and Epistles. As it was incumbent upon the Jews to compare Jesus's past, present, and future actions, so are we obliged scripturally to know him by reading *John* 8 in conjunction with the related biblical events that come before and after: 'For some basis had now been laid for faith, though they had not yet achieved the level to which they were later to be advanced. So our Lord Jesus encouraged these people to be steadfast in that which they had somehow begun until they proceeded to perfect knowledge of him'.⁴³ The *Paraphrase on John*, therefore, furnishes a convenient *locus classicus* for the notion that Christ, in his exchange with the adulterous woman and her indicters, was fashioning a sacred image, exegetical in form and function, that requires spiritually to be parsed and interpreted by recourse to other scriptural loci. That Erasmus's paraphrase on *John* 8 cleaves so closely to the argument of the *Glossa*, especially its patristic citations and Nicholas of Lyra's integral postils, suggests that both sources were crucial in establishing the exegetical context for Bruegel's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*. His pictorial version of this subject, even if it does not directly derive from Erasmus's intensely visual paraphrase, bears so striking a resemblance to its verbal imagery, and so easily accommodates its analogical tropes, that one may well be justified in asking whether Bruegel was converting into paint the scriptural image that Erasmus had vividly rendered in *paraphrasi*. In this sense, Bruegel may be said to have emulated Erasmus, encoding into the grisaille various references to the cross and the burdensome vocation it entails for *Jesus inclinatus in homine*.⁴⁴

Bruegel would also surely have known the imagery of *Psalm* 21, recited on Good Friday as part of the solemn liturgy of the Passion. The association

⁴² Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 112. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 99.

⁴³ Sider (ed.) – Phillips (trans.), *Paraphrase on John* 113. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Iohannem* 99.

⁴⁴ *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria* V, col. 1153.

between *John* 8:3–11 and *John* 19:17, between the ministry of Christ and his Passion, partly rests upon the Psalmist's foundational metaphor of Christ as worm in *Psalms* 21:7: 'But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people'. As Augustine explains in the *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, one of his most widely read treatises, this psalm is 'spoken in the person of the Crucified', who speaks 'not in the person of [sinful] Adam', but in his own person, as Jesus Christ, 'that so at least human pride might deign to imitate [his] humanity'.⁴⁵ According to Augustine, the connection between the imagery of dust and of the cross is strengthened in verse 16, 'Thou hast brought me down into the dust of death', which refers both to Christ fallen beneath the weight of the cross and to Christ crucified: 'And to the ungodly appointed to death, whom the wind casteth forth as dust from the face of the earth, Thou broughtest Me down'.⁴⁶ The Psalmist, Augustine further observes, draws a parallel between the gospel doctrine disseminated by Christ Minister and the Passion endured by Christ Crucified. The Passion has an exegetical force that unlocks the wisdom deeply embedded within the *doctrina Christi*: 'My wisdom, which was written of Me in the sacred books, was, as if hard and shut up, not understood; but after that the fire of My Passion was applied, it was, as if melted, manifested, and entertained in the memory of My Church'.⁴⁷ The psalm's vision of Christ lowered unto dust, like its call to view his teaching through the lens of the Passion, correlates to Bruegel's image of Christ humbly writing in the dust, as also to the layering of allusions to the Passion onto a key episode from his Temple ministry. That Bruegel shows Jesus tracing the text he also enunciates in *John* 8:7 accentuates the analogy to *Psalms* 21:7, which is commonly interpreted, following Augustine, as spoken in the voice of Christ. Other parallels make it likely that Bruegel is inviting the viewer to read the grisaille in terms of *Psalms* 21's richly worked imagery of the Passion, as expounded by Augustine.⁴⁸ For instance,

⁴⁵ Augustine A., *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, trans. J.E. Tweed – T. Scratton – H.M. Wilkins, et al., 6 vols. (London: 1847–1848) I 144. Cf. Augustine A., *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 1–32 (*Expos.*), ed. C. Weidmann, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* XCIII/1A (Vienna: 2011) 317.

⁴⁶ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms* 147. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 325.

⁴⁷ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms* 146. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 325.

⁴⁸ On *Psalms* 21 as a major source of Passion iconography, and its mining by exegetes and liturgists who used it to visualize the torments of Christ, see Marrow J., 'Circumdederunt me canes multi: Christ's Tormentors in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977) 167–181, esp. 168–172.

his exposition of verse 17, 'For many dogs have encompassed me', brings to mind the rigoristic scribes and Pharisees who attempt to entrap Jesus: 'For many came about Me barking, not for truth, but for custom'.⁴⁹ His exposition of verse 21, 'Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword', describes it as a prayer for salvation of the people from the hostile representatives of custom, and as such, perhaps applies to the way Bruegel's Jesus interposes himself protectively between his followers at left and the scribes and Pharisees at right.⁵⁰ And the exposition of verse 22, 'Save me from the lion's mouth', celebrates the virtue of humility and lauds Jesus for embracing it fully: 'And from the loftiness of the proud, exalting themselves to special pre-eminence, and enduring no partakers, save My humility'.⁵¹ In showing how Jesus humbles himself before the upholders of the law, Bruegel epitomizes the psalm's renunciation of pride.

Erasmus revisited the paradox of glorious humility, adducing as paradigms both the ministry and Passion of Christ, in the various editions of the *Adagiorum chiliades* (*Collection of One Thousand Adages*) that feature the apothegm 'Sileni Alcibiadis' (The Sileni of Alcibiades). According to Roger A.B. Mynors, the saying first appeared as a short entry in the 1508 Aldine edition of the *Chiliades*, but by 1515, the explanatory apparatus had begun greatly to expand, assuming its very extensive final form in the Froben editions of 1517/18, 1528, and later.⁵² Having printed the adage separately in 1517, Froben then issued seven further editions, in Latin, Dutch, English, French, German, and Spanish. The 'Sileni Alcibiades' can therefore be said to qualify as one of Erasmus's most popular works, and for this reason, the many points of comparison between Erasmus's exposition of the adage and Bruegel's composition of *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* deserve closer examination.⁵³

⁴⁹ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms* 147. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 325.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms* 147. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 327.

⁵¹ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms* 147. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 327.

⁵² On the 'Sileni Alcibiades', see Mynors R.A.B. (trans. – annot.), *Collected Works of Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100* (Toronto – Buffalo – London) 405–406; Weemans M., "Herri met de Bles's *Sleeping Peddler*: An Exegetical and Anthropomorphic Landscape", *Art Bulletin* 88 (2006) 459–481, esp. 473–475; and Weemans, "Bles's *Way to Calvary*" 315–322.

⁵³ On the currency of Latin adages, as they pertain to Bruegel, see Sullivan M., "Bruegel's Proverbs: Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance", *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991) 431–466; on proverb collections in the vernacular and Bruegel's engagement with them, see Meadow M., *Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 'Netherlandish Proverbs' and the Practice of Rhetoric* (Zwolle: 2002).

The *Adages*, strictly speaking, are by no means exegetical, but the ‘Sileni Alcibiades’, in its account of Christ as a Silenus figure, marshals the same scriptural loci that Bruegel later folded into his portrayal of Christ as paragon of humility and harbinger of the way of the cross. The Silenus of Alcibiades, as Erasmus explains, refers to small figurines of carved wood that opened to reveal the effigy of a deity: they came to stand for any person who seemed absurd or ridiculous from without, but upon careful inspection was discovered to be sublime and beautiful from within. Erasmus invokes as his prime example Christ, whose humble background and lowly appearance were a mockery to the Pharisees, whose toilsome embrace of the human condition led finally to the way of the cross, and whose willingness to shoulder the burden of human sin ensured the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecies of the servant. This justification of the analogy between Christ and the Silenus of Alcibiades comprises the full range of scriptural allusions assembled by Bruegel – the servant songs of Isaiah, the references to the cross in *John* 8 and 19, and more generally, to the Passion elsewhere in the Gospels and Epistles. Like Bruegel, Erasmus laminates allusions to the ministry and Passion of Christ, maintaining that his efforts as teacher are themselves stations on the way of the cross, indices of the all-encompassing vocation of servitude that secure his claim to dignity in lowliness, splendor in abjection:

And what of Christ? Was not He too a marvellous Silenus, (if one may be allowed to use such language of Him)? And I for my part do not see how any who proudly call themselves Christians can escape the duty of reproducing this to the utmost of their power. Observe the outside surface of this Silenus: to judge by ordinary standards, what could be humbler or more worthy of disdain? Parents of modest means and lowly station, and a humble home; poor Himself and with few and poor disciples, recruited not from noblemen’s palaces or the chief sects of the Pharisees or the lecture-rooms of philosophers, but from the publican’s office and the nets of fishermen. And then His way of life: what a stranger He was to all physical comforts as He pursued through hunger and weariness, through insults and mockery the way that led to the cross! It was this aspect of Him that the mystic and poet contemplated when he described Him in the words (Isaiah 53:2–3), ‘He had no form nor comeliness; we beheld Him and there was nothing to look upon, and we desired Him, despised as He was and the last of men’, and a great deal that follows to the same effect. And now, if one has the good fortune to have a nearer view of this Silenus, open – if, in other words, He shows Himself in His mercy to anyone, the eyes of whose soul have been washed clean – in heaven’s name what a treasure you will find, in that cheap setting what a pearl, in that lowliness what grandeur, in that poverty what riches, in that weakness what unimaginable valour, in that disgrace what glory, in all

those labours what perfect refreshment, and in that bitter death, in short, a never-failing spring of immortality!⁵⁴

Erasmus's adage is all the more relevant to Bruegel's panel in that the author construes his portrayal of Christ as pictorial in character, calling it an *imago* that Christians should closely attend: 'Why are those men so much revolted by this picture of Him ('ab hac imagine'), who boast none the less that they bear His name?'⁵⁵

The saying 'Silenus Alcibiades' can be applied as well to the format of the grisaille, whose plain exterior harbors an exceptionally rich subject, partially concealing it from any viewer unable to engage with the exegetical analogies that the picture implicitly sponsors – the parallel between Christ the humble teacher writing upon the dusty ground and Christ the worm who eats the dust of the earth, between his lowering himself before the sinners around him and his carrying of the cross, between his ministry of service and his sacrificial servitude. In this respect, pictorial execution and Christological argument are perfectly matched. The apparent simplicity of the grisaille, its eschewal of color and compositional clarity, make it analogous to the modest, unprepossessing exterior of a Silenus figure; and like such a Silenus, which may be opened to reveal a finer deity, the grisaille may be unfolded, its exegetical apparatus probed, its beautiful argument apprehended. The result, in the one case as in the other, is that the true nature of Christ, his incarnate divinity, will be revealed. Indeed, to use an Erasmian simile, the simple style and complex content of Bruegel's

⁵⁴ Mynors (trans. – annot.), *Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100* 264. Cf. Erasmus Desiderius, *Adagiorum chiliades* (Basil, Johann Froben: 1541) 683: 'An non mirificus quidam Silenus fuit Christus? Si fas est de hoc ad eum loqui modum, quem equidem haud video cur non omnes pro virili debeant exprimere, qui Christiani nomine gloriantur. Si summam Sileni faciem intuearis, quid iuxta popularem aestimationem abiectius, aut contemptius? Tenuēs & obscuri parentes, domus humilis: ipse pauper & pauculus, & pauperculus habuit discipulos: non e magnatum palatij, non e pharisaeorum cathedris, non e philosophorum scholis, sed a telonio & retibus ascitos. Tum vita, quam a voluptatibus omnibus aliena, per famem, per lassitudinem, per convicia, per ludibria, ad crucem denique pervenit. Hac illum parte contemplabatur mysticus ille vates, cum eum depingens: Non erat, inquit, ei species, neque decor. Vidimus eum, & non erat aspectus: & desideravimus eum despectum, ac novissimum virorum. Caeteraque permulta, quae in hanc sequuntur sententiam. Iam si contingat apertum hunc Silenum propius intueri, hoc est, si cui dignetur ipse se purgatis animi luminibus ostendere, deum immortalem, quam ineffabilem reperies thesaurum: in quanta vilitate, quale margaritum: in quanta humilitate, quantam sublimitatem: in quanta paupertate, quantas divitias: in quanta infirmitate, quam incogitabilem virtutem: in quanta ignominia, quantam gloriam: in quantis laboribus, quam absolutam requiem. Denique in morte tam acerba, perennem immortalitatis fontem'.

⁵⁵ Mynors (trans. – annot.), *Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100* 264. Cf. Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades* 683: 'Cur si abhorrent ab hac imagine, qui titulo tamen illius se iactant?'

panel are like the components of a parable: ‘The parables in the Gospels, if you judge them by their outward shell, would be thought, surely, by everyone to be the work of an ignoramus. Crack the nutshell and of course you will find that hidden wisdom which is truly divine, something in truth very like Christ Himself.’⁵⁶ By the same token, the process of interpretation activated by the grisaille’s conjunction of simple style and complex content, resembles the process of scriptural exegesis, as described by Erasmus: ‘After all, Scripture too has its own Sileni. Pause at the surface, and what you see is sometimes ridiculous; were you to pierce to the heart of the allegory, you would venerate the divine wisdom’.⁵⁷ The Christian calling, as Erasmus avows, requires that one see the spiritual truth wantonly ignored by the scribes and Pharisees – namely, that Christ ‘though he was in every way the lord and master of all things, took upon himself the part of a servant and not a master’.⁵⁸

The adage ‘Silenus Alcibiades’, as elucidated by Erasmus, since it concerns a pagan *imago* that precisely corresponds to the sacred *imago* bodied forth by Christ, can be said to distill and, more than this, to commend the process of visual exegesis that Bruegel’s *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* likewise encourages and cultivates. As I have tried to demonstrate, this process presumes a high level of familiarity with the Bible, combined with sensitivity to the visual analogies that prompt reflection on parallel pericopes – the complementary imagery of *John* 8:8 and *Psalms* 21:7, for example. These analogies, whether they bridge the two Testaments or function solely in the New, are for the most part typological; moreover, they tend to operate intra-scripturally, bringing selected passages into mutual relation, so that they are read in tandem: there is little reliance on the systematic exegesis of the theologians, and only the more standard exegetical sources – the *Glossa*, Nicholas of Lyra’s postils, and Augustine’s *Enarrationes* – are likely to have been consulted. These sources would probably have been familiar to Bruegel and his viewers from sermons and

⁵⁶ Mynors (trans. – annot.), *Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100* 267. Cf. Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades* 684: ‘Evangelicas parabolas, si primum aestimes corticem, quis non iudicet hominis esse idiotae? Si nucem frangas, nimirum reperiēs arcanam illam, ac vere divinam sapientiam, planeque quiddam ipsi Christo simillimum’.

⁵⁷ Mynors (trans. – annot.), *Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100* 267. Cf. Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades* 684: ‘Iam habent & suos Silenos arcanæ literæ. Si consistas in superficie, ridicula nonnumquam res sit: si penetres usque ad anagogen, divinam adores sapientiam’.

⁵⁸ Mynors (trans. – annot.), *Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100* 271. Cf. Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades* 686: ‘[...] qui cum modis omnibus princeps ac dominus esset omnium, ministri partes suscepit, non domini’.

the ferial liturgy. The pertinence of the Erasmian material is fourfold: his conception of *paraphrasis* is visual, indeed pictorial; in the *Paraphrase on John* and the *Adages*, he views the ministry of Christ by reference to the Passion, and vice-versa, interweaving the *doctrina Christi* and the *via crucis*; his conception of scriptural exegesis is visual, in that it is exemplified by the adage 'Silenus Alcibiades' and his image-based reading of it; and throughout, he appreciates Christ as an image-maker whose preferred pedagogical instruments – illustrative parables and enacted tableaux – evince a clear commitment to the process of visual exegesis.

Bruegel's interest in reading the Bible through scriptural images was distinctive in degree (subtlety and ingenuity of visual argument) not kind, as comparison with Gerard van Groeningen's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, engraved by Lucas van Doetecum and included in the 1579 and 1585 editions of Gerard de Jode's *Thesaurus veteris et novi Testamenti*, may serve to indicate [Fig. 4].⁵⁹ For Van Groeningen, the emphasis falls on the Solomonic temple precinct, the authority of which Jesus usurps when he inscribes his admonition to the scribes and Pharisees. The miter worn by the foremost accuser identifies him as a Temple priest who represents the old religion, soon to be superseded. Christ points at what he has just written and with his other hand gestures toward a cluster of onlookers, whose consciences he hopes to stir. He is speaking the words recorded in *John* 8:7: 'He that is without sin among you [...]' (recorded in the inscription at the base of the print). In fact, Van Groeningen is more exact than Bruegel about the moment illustrated: it is the interval between the two campaigns of bending down to write, when Jesus 'lifted himself up' to clarify what he had silently been communicating. However, the action of lifting himself, along with the gesture of his outstretched arms, also constitutes a patent allusion to a future event – the crucifixion, prophesied in *John* 8:28, 'When you shall have lifted up the Son of man [...]'. His attitude of genuflection further inflects the gesture's significance, allowing it to be read as expressive of humble entreaty, and consequently,

⁵⁹ On Van Groeningen's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, plate 9 of the series *Events in and around the Temple*, see Luyten G. (ed.) – Schuckman C. (comp.), *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700: Gerard van Groeningen*, 2 vols. (Rotterdam – Amsterdam: 1997) I 115, no. 87; Luyten G. – Schuckman C. (eds.) – Nalis H. (comp.), *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700: The Doetecum Family*, 4 vols. (Rotterdam: 1998) III 112, no. 625. On De Jode's *Thesaurus*, see Mielke H., "Antwerpener Graphik in der 2. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts: Der *Thesaurus veteris et novi Testamenti* des Gerard de Jode (1585) und seine Künstler", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1975) 29–83; and Rosier B.A., *The Bible in Print: Netherlandish Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Leiden: 1997) I 138.



Fig. 4. [COL. PL. 1] Lucas van Doetecum after Gerard van Groeningen, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* (ca. 1572). Engraving and etching, 19.8 × 28.8 cm. Plate 9 from *Events in and around the Temple*, in Gerard de Jode (ed.), *Thesaurus sacrarum historiarum Veteris et Novi Testamenti, elegantissimis imaginibus expressus excellentissimorum in hac arte virorum opera* (Antwerp, Gerard de Jode: 1585). London, British Museum AN1262367001.

of self-abnegation. Alternatively, it functions as a welcoming gesture addressed to the penitent adulteress, who stands for all sinners whom Christ offers benevolently to embrace. Van Groeningen's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, part of a series focusing on his ministry in and around the Temple, is less multi-layered than Bruegel's, in part because the decision to show Christ 'lifted up' rather than 'bowing himself down' reduces greatly the range of visual analogies upon which depend the image's exegetical scope and argument.⁶⁰ In any event, comparison of the panel and print reveal how adeptly visual means were utilized to harness multiple scriptural loci and reflect upon them conjointly.

⁶⁰ On the series, *Events in and around the Temple*, a suite of thirteen plates engraved ca. 1572, see Luyten (ed.) – Schuckman (comp.), *New Hollstein: Gerard van Groeningen* 113–131, nos. 78–91; and Luyten – Schuckman (eds.) – Nalis (comp.), *New Hollstein: Doetecum Family* 109–127, nos. 616–629.

As mentioned above, the grisaille can be seen, in certain respects, to allude specifically to one of Bruegel's greatest compositions, the *Carrying of the Cross* of 1564 [Fig. 3]. Not only is the figure of Christ positioned similarly in both works, but the figures of the Virgin Mary and the penitent adulteress are also analogous. Mary's thumbs are crossed, and the sign of the cross reverberates through the rest of her interlaced fingers. John's pointing gesture gives added emphasis to her crossed hands: combined with her mournful face and slumped posture, they reveal how intensely she identifies with her son, burdened as he is by the cross, and how heavily she is weighed down by compassion for Christ in his Passion. Unlike the woman taken in adultery, whose index fingers are extended in imitation of the scribing hand of Christ, Mary's hands are curved, in imitation of his right hand that curls around the bole of the cross, and left hand that cups the earth. Her closed eyes emphasize that her co-suffering is achieved meditatively, through the faculty of spiritual vision.⁶¹ Just as the grisaille opposes the adulteress to the scribe, so here Mary is opposed to the figure of Simon of Cyrene's wife, who wears a cross pendant from the rosary hanging at her waist, and yet does everything she can to prevent her husband from being drafted as an aide to Christ. Both Mary and Simon's wife are aligned with the picture's diagonal axes that cross at the figure of Christ fallen beneath the weight of the cross.⁶² Bruegel plays upon the irony of this juxtaposition: her back turned toward Jesus, Mary discerns him with the eyes of the spirit; turned toward him, Simon's wife yet fails to recognize the Christ, for she remains spiritually blind. Framed as antitheses, Mary and Simon's wife, like their counterparts in *Christ and*

⁶¹ Mary's arms enframe her heart, the seat of her sorrow. Another grisaille, the *Death of the Virgin* (ca. 1564), painted for Abraham Ortelius, analogizes the crossed fingers of St. John the Evangelist, sleeping at left, with the crucifix (propped up on a pillow) at which Mary intently stares. The relation between the sign of the cross made by John and the effigy of Christ crucified placed before Mary calls to mind the joint vigil kept by them at the foot of the cross. Bruegel draws a parallel between the gentle sleep of John and the beatific death of the Virgin, between the death-like sleep of the one and the sleep-like death of the other. These complementary states register as indices of their mutual absorption in the sacrificial death of Christ. On the analogical structure of Bruegel's *Death of the Virgin*, see Melion W.S., "Ego enim quasi obdormivi: Salvation and Blessed Sleep in Philip Galle's *Death of the Virgin*", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (1996) 15–53; and Sellink M., "The Death of the Virgin, c. 1564", in idem, *Bruegel* 194–195.

⁶² Positioned on these cruciform axes, Mary and Simon of Cyrene's wife are connected by the gray color of the former's habit and the latter's sleeves; this same color attaches both of them to Christ, who wears a darker shade of the same gray. Thus joined, they mark the three corners of a notional triangle, the sides of which are demarcated by pathways through the crowd of onlookers.

the Woman Taken in Adultery, function as scriptural prompts, bringing to mind a congeries of biblical passages relating to vision and blindness, not least *John* 9:39: ‘And Jesus said: “For judgment I am come into this world; that they who see not, may see; and they who see, may become blind”’. In the grisaille, this binary attaches to the distinction between evangelical faith and Pharisaism, between the acuity of the former and the blindness of the latter.⁶³

Many of the essays that follow, like the introduction above, explore the ramifications of visual exegesis for early modern interpreters of the Bible, the laity especially. For the most part, they examine the relation between artistic practice and biblical hermeneutics, although other kinds of sacred image are also considered. Practices of visual exegesis, as will become evident, set a standard for the interpretation of other kinds of image as well.

The first five essays give thought to visual typology – the analogical construction of types and antitypes – as a method of biblical interpretation. Jamie Smith sheds light on the sequence of Old Testament types that set forth the vocations of Jesus, Mary, and the donor in Jan van Eyck’s *Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele* of 1436. The Virgin and Child are seated within a choir ringed by an ambulatory, the figured capitals of which, as Smith shows, derive from the series of Pauline types expounded in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. One of these capitals features Jephthah who foreshadows the exegetical vocation of Christ, his mission of explicating Scripture: for Van Eyck, exegesis is visualized as a process of spiritual coloring that transforms monochromatic sculptural types into polychromatic pictorial antitypes. Wim François tracks the changes in William Vorsterman’s semi-official Dutch language Bibles and New Testaments, from the famous ‘Protestantizing’ illustrated Bible of 1528, rich in paratextual material, through the sparer, more orthodox Catholic Bibles of 1529–1531, to the more fully glossed, but still essentially Catholic Bibles of the 1530s to mid-1540s. The woodcut illustrations in the Vorsterman Bibles likewise waned and waxed, and François focuses on examples from the new set of illustrations in the Bibles of 1533–1534 and following,

⁶³ As Koenraad Jonckheere suggests in *Antwerp Art after Iconoclasm* 208–209, Bruegel may also be alluding to the association between the grisaille exterior of triptychs and their polychrome centerpieces. Seen in this light, the grisaille implicitly calls forth a polychrome image of the Carrying of the Cross. This polychrome image is to be visualized as internal to the beholder, just as it is internal to the virtual triptych the existence of which Bruegel’s panel infers. Bruegel is playing upon the dynamic relation between the pictorial image and the meditative images it calls forth.

examining the typological relationships they establish in conjunction with the many glosses and marginal annotations to the text, which continue the medieval typological tradition of the *Biblia Pauperum* and *Speculum humanae salvationis*.

Giovanni Careri takes stock of the pictorial devices utilized by Michelangelo in the Sistine *Last Judgment* to represent the end of historical time as the dissolution of scriptural typology. Foreshortening, the *figura serpentinata* (serpentine figure), and *terribilità* (forcefulness) cause time and space to contract, and with this contraction, the *distantia temporum* (historical distance) that separates and distinguishes between types and antitypes altogether ceases to exist. Colette Nativel unfolds the exegetical argument of Rubens's *Epitaph of Jan Michielsen and Maria Maes* of 1617. As one looks left to right, the figures of the Virgin and Child in the left wing adumbrate the Pietà cum Lamentation in the central panel, and they in turn prefigure John the Evangelist in the right wing, who gazes heavenward like Mary and carries the book of the Gospels, just as she bears up the body of Christ. These historical referents operate like scriptural types, and as Nativel argues, they have their source in several key passages from the *Gospel of John*, most importantly in *John* 1:17, which draws a parallel between the Law of Moses and the grace and truth of Christ. Caroline van Eck proposes that Vermeer's so-called *Allegory of Faith* be interpreted not as an allegory but instead as a collection of types, each of which connects to an adjacent thing, person, or event inhabiting a shared historical continuum. The picture consists of Old Testament types – the serpent and the apple, for example, or the crushing of the former by a stone – that prefigure the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrament of the Eucharist. That the female protagonist gazes at the image of the Crucifixion reflected in the spherical mirror – more precisely, at the mirror image of the painting in the painting – emphasizes the visual rather than textual nature of the scriptural types at issue. In this formulation, the process of exegesis proves to be emphatically pictorial.

The next five essays broaden the topic of discussion: they investigate how visual analogy, the structural principle that undergirds visual typology, operated as an exegetical instrument, enabling various kinds and degrees of hermeneutic engagement with sacred imagery. Bret Rothstein considers the meditative functions of 'edifying correlation' in the *Tree of Jesse* of ca. 1500, attributed either to Geertgen tot Sint Jans or Jan Mostaert, a painting that richly elaborates upon the metaphorical connotations of the rosary. Embedded within the pictorial fabric are numerous

ghedenckenissen (prompts to memory) that assist the beholder to discover analogies of form and of thought that may then be cultivated and amplified, as the votary sets about the task of exercising himself or herself spiritually. Walter Melion closely explicates Dirk Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* of 1523, showing how it diverges from pericopic traditions of scriptural illustration, and instead offers a reading of *Matthew* 4:18–22, *Mark* 1:16–18, and *Luke* 5:1–11 that exemplifies the evangelical mission of Christ and the apostolic vocation of his earliest followers. As portrayed by Vellert, Christ is seen to ponder the meaning of an everyday task, fishing, which he is about to convert into a metaphor (or better, a condensed parable) of Christian ministry, namely, fishing for men. The print's argument turns on an analogy between the metaphorical conversion of fishing and the spiritual conversion of Peter, and this analogy, issuing from intimate familiarity with Scripture, itself functions as a trope for the meditative process of visual exegesis.

Michel Weemans analyzes the exegetical form and function of two landscapes by Herri met de Bles, dating from the mid-sixteenth century, both of which include scenes of John the Baptist preaching. Such landscapes, if their argument is properly to be decoded, require the viewer to reflect upon analogical correspondences amongst biblical protagonists, elements representative of the Book of Nature, and topical details interpolated from the present time. Approached in this way – not iconographically but exegetically – Bles's landscapes may be said to foster a dynamic of conversion that pivots from the literal to the spiritual sense of things. Todd Richardson points up the privileged status of gesture in Jan van Hemessen's paintings, situating his work in the context of a developing interest in gesture and body language as aspects of visual communication, humanist interest in the gesture of ancient oratory, and a tradition of typological exegesis. Richardson's analysis of Van Hemessen's *Mocking of Christ*, in which Christ holds the cross as if playing a harp – thus invoking for the attentive, scripturally and visually learned viewer an association with King David, *Psalms* 22 and 57, and the Crucifixion – reveals how represented gestures are used to engage the viewer in a novel interpretation of a well-known subject, whose unfolding functions as a spiritual exercise. The importance of gesture likewise informs Tatiana Senkevitch's analysis of Philippe de Champaigne's *Sleep of Elijah*, commissioned by Anne of Austria, queen mother of France and counter-reformatory defender of the Eucharist, for the convent of Val-de-Grâce. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur's concept of the 'exegesis of human existence', Senkevitch examines the analogical

relationship between the story of the biblical figure and the personal history of the votary. Champaigne advances but doubly complicates the traditional typological, eucharistic meaning of the subject by, on the one hand, assimilating the subject to an exercise of personal devotion – especially as adduced by Anne's spiritual mentor, Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze, in her *La Traité de l'oraison mentale*, but also implicit in the eremetical subjects painted by Champaigne for Anne – and, on the other, drawing on inventions by Raphael, thereby coupling the matter of artistic imitation with typological exegesis.

The next subsection comprises four essays that deal with a crucial function of exegetical images – the spiritual conformation of the viewer-exegete to Christ. Ingrid Falque interprets the spatial ambiguities evident in Hans Memling's *Virgin and Child with Maarten van Nieuwenhove* of 1487, and other such works, as allusions to the three registers of Christian life that Jan van Ruusbroec and other proponents of the *devotio moderna* construe as distinct yet complementary, interpenetrative rather than successive – the active life, the inner life, and the contemplative life. Based in exegetical meditation upon Scripture, these three facets of the votary's espousal to Christ are constitutive of the *ghemeine leven* (common life) that reconciles humanity and the Godhead. Elliott Wise, focusing on Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*, demonstrates that its most conspicuous feature – the vermilion veil juxtaposed to the body of Christ – derives from the exegetical imagery of the Holy Blood vividly evoked by Ruusbroec in such treatises as *The Spiritual Tabernacle* and *A Mirror of Eternal Blessedness*. The figurative significance of the color vermilion originates in exegesis of *Psalm* 21's oracular reference to Christ the Man of Sorrows as a worm ('vermiculus'). More important to Rogier than Ruusbroec's mystical theology were the dynamic methods of scriptural image-making he promoted and the intensely evocative verbal images he produced to foment and sustain the soul's spiritual conformation.

Leopoldine Prosperetti examines a new category of *imagines exegeticae* – epitomes of eremitical solitude – that first became popular in the 1580s. Designed by Marten de Vos, engraved by Adrian Collaert, and issued by Jan Sadeler ca. 1587, the print series *Solitudo sive vitae patrum* (*Solitude or the Lives of the Fathers*), along with its three sequels, distills the nature of the solitary lives led by the Desert Fathers and recounted by the great exponents of the *vita solitaria*, from Saint Jerome to Francesco Petrarca. The *Solitudo* consists not only of pictorial images but also of appended *carmines*, which jointly comment on the textual sources, codifying them into a visual and verbal *vitae patrum*; conversely, this novel compendium

was itself the object of exegetical commentary, as Prosperetti makes clear by reference to Georges Garnefelt's *Elucidationes*. Joseph Chorpenning traces the exegetical origins of the meditative and contemplative imagery of the heart famously promulgated by Francis de Sales as an alternative to the militant Catholicism prevalent in Paris at the close of the sixteenth century. In particular, Francis favored the process of *lectio divina*, applying it to the principal scriptural *loci* whence issues the Salesian portrayal of the sacred heart – *Proverbs* 23:26, *Song of Songs* 8:6, *Joel* 2:12, and *Galatians* 2:20. As Chorpenning explains, the ultimate source of Francis's cordiform word-pictures and word-emblems was *Genesis* 1:26, which he construed as a warrant for the spiritual painting of human hearts in the image and likeness of their source – the loving heart of Jesus.

The five essays that follow adduce other examples of biblical reading, as effected through images. Maria Deiters considers a particularly active engagement with the biblical text: the Pfinzing Bible, a so-called House or Family Bible created by a Nuremberg patrician, Martin Pfinzing, which consists of Sigmund Feyerabend's 1561 edition of the Luther translation greatly expanded through the addition of prints and miniatures by Albrecht Dürer, Jost Amman, Virgil Solis, and others; extensive textual commentary on those images, probably by a Lutheran theologian; and a foreword connecting the Bible to the family history. Deiters likens the Pfinzing Bible to other forms of didactic literature, such as Veit Dietrich's *Summaria christlicher Lehr*, in both the use for lay devotions – the understanding and internalization of the word of God – and the tripartite structure of biblical passages, images, and commentaries. She analyzes the role played by images in the ruminative, non-linear reading of the Pfinzing Bible, with particular attention to the woodcuts of Virgil Solis and their hand-coloring in the circle of Georg Mack the Elder, whose liberal use of gold enables a sensuous apprehension of the process of illumination through the Holy Spirit. Merel Groentjes assays the historical structure of Maarten van Heemskerck's extensive print series, the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (*Disasters of the Jewish People*) of 1569, engraved and published by Philips Galle. Many of the biblical episodes selected by Heemskerck were rarely if ever illustrated, and more familiar scenes are often depicted in a new way, leading Groentjes to inquire into his *modus operandi*. As she points out, even his approach to typology is unconventional: analogies are posited between types and antitypes situated entirely within the Old Testament, and the history of the Jews, as he and his collaborator Hadrianus Junius conceive it, consists in a gradual loss of typological coherence, resulting finally in a disconnect between the later history of the Jews and

the Gospel antitypes – the Nativity and Epiphany – that the Old Testament events apparently fail to portend.

Shelley Perlove surveys Rembrandt's career-long representation of the Second Temple, the sacred setting for important events in Christ's infancy and ministry, and its elaborate architecture, accoutrements, and rites. More than merely archaeological, certain details of his compositions, such as clouds of incense smoke in several works and the treasure box (*corban*) in his etching of the *Presentation in the Temple*, parallel textual commentaries of Christian scholars, including those in the *Statenbijbel*, in interpreting Hebrew history, rites, and Scripture – especially the prophecies of Haggai and Malachi – as foretelling the advent of Jesus as Messiah, the 'glory of the latter Temple'. Rembrandt thus visualizes not only New Testament narratives, but Christological readings of Hebrew prophecy and history. James Clifton seeks to clarify such visual hermeneutics by proposing a partial taxonomy of modes of depiction in scriptural illustration, using as his examples images of the Beatitudes, which were represented in remarkably different ways around the turn of the seventeenth century in the Netherlands. He identifies five modes (narrative, exemplificatory, figurative, hieroglyphic, and verbal), but recognizes the possibility of additional ones, as well as hybrids of these, all of which function as 'modes of expounding on sacred Scripture', inevitably overlapping with, but not aligning with the traditional four senses of Scripture (literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical) and thus functioning independently as instruments of (visual) exegesis. His focus is on the structural, on how the various parts of these images (and, most often, image-text combinations) function together, as well as on how the votary may activate the parts in a dynamic, ruminative, non-linear reading of them. His ultimate example, that of the so-called text paintings in some Reformed churches, leads to a consideration of the (re)presentation of Scripture as image and, consequently, the importance of frames and framing in the production of meaning, a subject examined incisively in the following essay by Ralph Dekoninck and Agnès Guiderdoni. With examples of biblical illustration and religious emblematics ranging from the last decade of the sixteenth century to the first decade of the eighteenth, the authors analyze and categorize the various forms of structural and functional interplay between central images and their framing devices, between *ergon* and *parergon*, and the ways in which this 'combinatory art' can operate as a *machina spiritualis*, producing simultaneously meaning and spiritual experience. These 'games of framing and montage' offer an exegesis both of their biblical content and – through the meta-discourse of the frame – of them-

selves, thus participating in discourses of the word (especially Scripture) as image and image as text.

The next six essays explore some of the ways in which visual images transmit authority or respond to the authoritative status of the scriptural subjects they represent. Birgit Ulrike Münch examines Albrecht Dürer's panel of *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1508), painted for Frederick the Wise of Saxony, which represents the torture and execution of soldiers who had converted to Christianity while fighting for the Romans in Asia Minor, but also includes a double portrait of Dürer and his friend Conrad Celtes. The legend was introduced in the twelfth century in support of the crusades, which would have resonated with Frederick as well, but it had no clear textual or visual tradition at the turn of the sixteenth century, allowing the artist an unusual freedom in his interpretation. Münch elucidates Dürer's adaptations from North Italian painting, as well as his allusions to Dante, while placing the painting within the context of Frederick's famous collection of relics and Wittenberg humanism. Arthur diFuria situates Maarten van Heemskerck's *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple* of 1549 within the shifting religious and political circumstances of the Low Countries at mid-century. The print's ambivalent relation to multiple sources of authority responds to these unsettled conditions: it evidently derives from Raphael's *Expulsion of Heliodorus*, but solely acknowledges the authorship of Heemskerck; it portrays a subject considered scriptural by Roman Catholics and apocryphal by Lutherans; on one account, it celebrates papal and episcopal authority, but on another, questions the probity of the Church, calling for its purification. The accommodationist stance of Heemskerck (and his collaborator Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert) toward these competing claims testifies to their complex and interrogative reading of *translatio* as a category of imitation deriving from the political concept of *translatio imperii*.

Wolfgang Neuber peruses two sorts of familial book – the one textual, the other pictorial – that would have held pride of place, along with the family Bible, within the German aristocratic household the *Familie Beck*, functioning as a warrant of their social and cultural authority. His case study centers on the *Family Book* of Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf, begun by the owner's grandfather Konrad and father Markus, and significantly expanded by Hieronymus, whose additions were designed to operate within an imperial system of appraisal susceptible to what Neuber calls the 'exegesis of rank'. The largely textual *Family Book* was supplanted sometime between 1570 and 1580 by a fully pictorial *Portrait Book* that signals a crucial shift from verbal to visual signifiers of familial and personal

prestige. A politically charged representation of a biblical narrative is the subject of Dagmar Eichberger's essay, in this instance an angel of God persuading a reluctant Gideon to free the Israelites from their enemies, which was staged as one of the five multi-media tableaux vivants – organized and subsequently described and depicted in a manuscript by Lucas de Heere – that punctuated the festive entry of Francis, Duke of Anjou and newly appointed sovereign of the United Provinces, into the Calvinist city of Ghent on 20 August 1582. It was common practice to evoke Old Testament heroes in modern political contexts in the Netherlands, including entries and other forms of representation, but Gideon was an unusual choice. Eichberger considers previous depictions of him, including Maarten van Heemskerck's series of six prints from 1561, on which De Heere drew in staging the tableau, and a series of eight tapestries commissioned by Duke Philip the Good, celebrating his newly founded Order of the Golden Fleece, and argues that De Heere employed the specific episode of the dialogue between Gideon and the angel to persuade the ruler to lead the Calvinist community against the Spanish and restore the values of the Burgundian dukes.

Larry Silver addresses the vexed question of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's putative response to contemporary events – namely, the oppressive Spanish regency in the Netherlands – in his late works of 1562–1567. While acknowledging such a response, discreetly achieved by the artist, with 'plausible deniability' in the face of possible punishment, Silver calls attention to Bruegel's consistent expression of religious as well as pacifist sensibilities, in which political concerns over tyranny and violence, for example, are subsumed into a belief in an era of grace marked by the advent of Christ as Prince of Peace, and holy figures are offered as exemplars of piety and humility. Bruegel's pictorial strategies, such as the staging of Christological narratives so that the viewers are challenged to discover the main subject – and thus the spiritual content – of the works, engage them in a process of discovery, interpretation, and insight. Jürgen Müller delves into the semantic ambivalence and subversive argument to be found in two late paintings by Pieter Bruegel, *The Peasant and the Birdnester* and the *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*, both dated 1568. Whereas the former contains an inverted allusion to Sebastian Brant's chapter on *Eygenrichtikeit* ('self-assertive pertinacity') in the *Ship of Fools*, the latter covertly endorses Sebastian Franck's account of heresy as the true fruit of institutional religion, in the *Paradoxon* and the *Geschycht-bibel*. Müller maintains that Bruegel's readings of Scripture are implicitly heterodox: the *Birdnester* ironizes the biblical parable of the wide and

narrow paths, and the *Blind Leading the Blind* utilizes the fall of the blind in *Matthew* 15:14, *Luke* 6:39–41, and *Romans* 2:19, to cast doubt on the very notion of confessional legitimacy.

The subsequent three essays focus on exegetical emblems. Nathalie de Brézé explores the narrative, figurative, and exegetical function of putti, angels, and related celestial beings – so often overlooked – in the paintings, prints, and emblems of the *pictor doctus* Otto Vaenius. She demonstrates that his understanding of angels, which she calls ‘the vectors of the Scriptures’, though ultimately derived from the scriptural source material, was filtered through patristic and medieval commentary. Angels bearing biblical inscriptions in several of the paintings in Vaenius’s cycle of *The Triumph of the Church* play a crucial role in what can be described as an ‘allegory of exegesis’. Agnès Guiderdoni sheds light on the extensive fresco cycle painted in the Visitandine church of Sainte-Marie-d’En-Haut, Grenoble, to commemorate the canonization of Francis de Sales in 1666 and to enhance the attendant festivities. This pictorial complex, designed by the Jesuit emblemist Claude-François Ménéstrier, comprises various kinds of symbolic image: *camayeux de cirage* (monochromes resembling polished waxworks), *imprese* (devices), *vases* (vessels), *images iconologiques* (iconological figures in the form of female personifications), and twelve medallions chronicling the life of the Virgin, each episode of which encodes an allegorical reference to the life of Francis de Sales as co-founder of the Visitandine Institute. These elements, as a whole and in their parts, were construed by Ménéstrier as exegetical in form and function, their ultimate source being the Bible and its many emblems and enigmata. Trudélien van ’t Hof further extends our consideration from Scripture per se to the history of religion – its ‘progressive decline and corruption [...] and its recent reformation’ – as conceived and depicted emblematically by Romeyn de Hooghe around 1700 in his *Hieroglyphica*, which foregrounds images and relegates explanatory texts to a secondary role. De Hooghe argued that hieroglyphs, or ‘sacred engravings’, could best convey essential meaning to the audience. Focusing her attention on de Hooghe’s treatment of the Lutheran Reformation, van ’t Hof analyzes his ‘interpictorality’, that is, his reference to existing imagery and his transformation of it through ‘replacing’, ‘adding’, and ‘composing’ toward the generation of new meaning.

The final two essays clarify the relation between two exegetical functions – prefiguration and transfiguration – closely associated with visual typology (the transformation of the type in and through the anti-type) and its desired effect on the exegete (his or her transformation into

the image of Christ, the ultimate exegete). Alexander Linke discerns the interconnections between exegetical typology and concepts of artistic competition and continuity and analyzes the intersection of the two in several projects by Giorgio Vasari that respond to Raphael's famous and definitive *Transfiguration*, a painting born of a storied rivalry between Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo. The subject of the Transfiguration of Christ, in its extensive theological ramifications, offered the possibility of transcending traditional typological meaning and unifying disparate biblical subjects, operating as a kind of 'typological meta-image', linking past and present within both the history of the divine covenant and the history of art. Barbara Haeger's close formal and iconographic reading of one of the versions of Rubens's richly allusive *Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death* enables her to assess how the painting structures the viewer's experience, not only to reveal sacred truth, but also to provoke self-reform in conformation to the perfected image of the resurrected Christ. In marking the transformation of the subject from Lutheran invention to Catholic reformulation, she notes the alignment of Rubens's painting with a Jesuit emphasis on the mediating role of Christ, institutions, and images. Rubens conflates the temple veil rent in twain and an unveiling shroud, resurrection and triumphant presence, *historia* and *imago*, thus disclosing the image of the invisible God, figuring the Tridentine sanction of images, and prompting the votary to engage in a transformative process of visual exegesis.

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I. VISUAL TYPOLOGIES

JAN VAN EYCK'S TYPOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL KNIGHTHOOD
IN THE VAN DER PAELE MADONNA

Jamie L. Smith

The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele, completed in 1436 by the leading Flemish artist of the day, was the most prominent commission gifted to Saint Donatian's church in Brugge (Bruges) [Fig. 1].¹ The largest known painting by Jan van Eyck besides *The Ghent Altarpiece*, this work has been extensively researched and widely interpreted.² One of the questions remaining unresolved about this painting is the subject depicted on the carved capital directly above the head of the work's patron, Canon Joris van der Paele [Fig. 2]. The identification of this small detail may help us better understand the major themes of the painting and gain a greater sense of how those concepts relate to the panel's patron and its original setting.

I will begin by situating the capital carving within the contexts of the picture and what is known about the circumstances of its creation. In the foreground we see Canon van der Paele, kneeling in the presence of the enthroned Virgin Mary, who holds the Christ Child on her lap. Van

¹ On the prominence of the commission, see: Martens M., "Patronage", in Ridderbos B. – Van Buren A. – Van Veen H. (eds.) *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception, and Research* (Amsterdam: 2005) 366–377, esp. 372. The attribution, dating, and patronage of the painting are supported by the Latin inscription on the lower frame: 'Master George van der Paele, canon of this church, has had this work made by the painter Jan van Eyck and he founded two chaplaincies to be served by choir personnel, 1434. He completed it in 1436'. (*HOC OP[US] FECIT FIERI MAG[ISTE]R GEORGI[US] DE PALA HUI[US] ECCLESIE CANONI[CUS] P[ER] JOHANNEM[UM] DE EYCK PICTURE[M] – ET FUNDAVIT HIC DUAS CAPELL[AN]IAS DE GR[EM]IO CHORI DOMINI – M^oCCC^oXXXIII^o C[OM]P[LE]T[UM] AU[TEM] 1436.*) On this inscription, see ibidem 366–367. Radiographic evidence indicates that 'and he founded two chaplaincies to be served by choir personnel' was a later addition. The alteration is thought to have been made after Van der Paele established the second chaplaincy in 1443 (two years after Jan van Eyck's death). See: Bisthoven A.J. de, *Stedelijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Groeningemuseum) Brugge 1*, De Vlaamse Primitieven 1. Corpus van de vijftiende-eeuwse schilderkunst in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1 (Brussels: 1981) 195–203.

² *The Madonna with Canon Joris van der Paele* measures 122.1 × 157.8 cm. without frame and 140.8 cm × 176.5 cm. with frame. The next largest single-panel work is *The Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* (ca. 1435), Paris, The Louvre, measuring 66 × 62 cm. without the lost frame. See: Dhanens E., *Hubert and Jan van Eyck* (New York: 1980) 383.



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 2] Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele* (1436). Oil on wood, 140.8 cm × 176.5 cm. including frame. Bruges, Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum. Image © Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.

der Paele's name saint, Saint George, who is clad in armor, presents the canon to the Virgin and Child. They are accompanied by Saint Donatian, the patron-saint of Brugge. It was to him that the city's Church of Saint Donatian was dedicated, and it was there that Joris van der Paele served as canon.³ In 1434, when the Canon's health began to fail, he

³ Joris van der Paele was born ca. 1370, in or near Brugge, where he died in 1443. In Sept. 1434, when he was excused from choir duties due to illness, he founded his first chaplaincy at the altar of Saints Peter and Paul. The chaplaincy consisted of three weekly masses: a requiem mass for the dead on Mondays; a low mass on Wednesdays; and a mass dedicated to the Holy Cross on Fridays. After saying mass, the chaplain would sprinkle Van der Paele's tombstone with holy water and say a *Miserere Mei* or a *De Profundis*. His tombstone was incised with a figure in canonicals with evangelist symbols in the corners. The canon also donated funds for church maintenance. In 1440, Van der Paele established a fund for an annual mass for the dead, a breakfast for his colleagues and an annual mass for his brother, Jodocus, who along with their uncle, was buried in the same chapel. A church inventory refers to the chapel as 'Capella Arbosio' and lists liturgical vestments and other objects that Van der Paele donated for use at the altar. In 1441, he donated



Fig. 2. Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*, detail (1436). Bruges, Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum. Image © Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.

commissioned Jan van Eyck to paint a panel for his family's chapel in Saint Donatian's, where he would be buried, and where he established chaplaincies for masses to be performed in memory of him and his family. Most researchers agree, as do I, that the painting was intended to function as a memorial panel, rather than as an altarpiece, because it does not

relics of Saint Christopher and Saint Ursula encased in a rock crystal cylinder mounted in a tower-shaped reliquary crowned with a crucifix and decorated with the donor's arms and a statuette of Saint George in a tabernacle. In 1443, Van der Paele founded a second chaplaincy providing for four masses on the remaining days of the week, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. These funds ran out four years after his death. See: Keyser R. de, "De Kanunnik Van der Paele", *Spiegel Historiael* 6 (1971) 336–43; *Het St. Donaaskapitel te Brugge (1350–1450)*, 3 vols. (Ph.D. dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven: 1972) III 192–193; and "Paele, Joris van der", *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek V* (Brussels: 1972), cols. 673–677. Also see: Vianene A., "Het Grafpaneel van Kanunnik van der Paele voltooid in 1436 door Jan van Eyck (Groeningemuseum Brugge)", *Biekorf: Westvlaams Archief voor Geschiedenis, Oudeheidkunde en Folklore* 66 (1965) 257–264; and Martens M., "Patronage" 366–377.

contain representations of Saint Peter or Saint Paul, to whom the altar in that chapel was dedicated.⁴

The figures in the painting stand in an interior that recalls the apse of a typical Romanesque church.⁵ The architecture is decorated with stone carvings depicting Old Testament narratives. On the throne's base are Adam and Eve [Fig. 3]. Sculptures on its arm-rests feature Cain murdering Abel and Samson killing the lion. Old Testament narratives also adorn the capitals of the pilasters behind the throne [Fig. 4]. Immediately to the left of Saint Donatian's head is the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. On the capital to the saint's right, the Jewish patriarch, Abraham, receives wine and bread from the priest Melchizedek. On the same fixture, at the



Fig. 3. Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*, detail (1436). Bruges, Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum. Image © Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.

⁴ Michael Hitchcock identified the picture as an altarpiece. Hitchcock D.M., *The Iconography of the Van der Paele Madonna by Jan van Eyck* (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University: 1976) 258. But there is no record that the canon donated the work in conjunction with the consecration of a new altar, as was customary at the time. See: Velden H. van der, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout: 2000) 280. Antoon Viaene compared the panel's function to stone memorials. See: Viaene, "Het Grafpaneel van Kanunnik van der Paele" 257–264; Terner R., "Bemerkungen zur 'Madonna des Kanonikus van der Paele'", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 44 (1979) 83–91; and Ward J.L., "Disguised Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism in Van Eyck's Paintings", *Artibus et Historiae* 15, 29 (1994) 9–53. The patron's coats-of-arms painted on the frame are consistent with a memorial function. Church windows were commonly decorated with heraldic devices of those for whom masses were to be said. See: Wilson J.C., *Painting in Bruges at the close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: 1998) 71.

⁵ Craig Harbison observed similarities between the Van der Paele interior and the Chapel of St. Basil in the Basilica of the Holy Blood, Bruges. See: Harbison C., *Jan Van Eyck: The Play of Realism* (London: 1997) 153–155.



Fig. 4. Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*, detail (1436). Bruges, Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum. Image © Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.

far right, an angel intervenes as Abraham obeys God's command to sacrifice his son Isaac.

There is general agreement on the identification of the aforementioned scenes. Carol Purtle convincingly interpreted Abel and Isaac as precursors for Christ as a sacrificial victim. She identified Samson killing the lion as a type for the harrowing of hell by Christ; and identified the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek with Christ's priesthood.⁶ She interpreted the series as forming themes of sacrifice, death and resurrection. These concepts reinforce the symbolism of the enthroned Virgin and child, the new Eve and the new Adam, whom Purtle identified with the Eucharist. Mary supports Christ on a white cloth spread on her lap, which seems to form a block-like ledge. This altar-shaped configuration is located in the space in a church usually occupied by an altar. Thus, the grouping figures the offering of Christ's body and blood in the rite of Holy Communion.

With these meanings in mind, we may now consider the capital in question, to the right, above the throne. There is consensus that, at the right corner of the capital, the small child in a twisting pose and the tall soldier behind him are David and Goliath.⁷ I agree. The imagery corresponds, in pose and clothing, to paintings of David and Goliath in fifteenth-century

⁶ Purtle C.J., *The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck* (Princeton: 1982) 13–15, 85–97.

⁷ Ibidem 94–95; Naftulin L., "A Note on the Iconography of the Van der Paele Madonna", *Oud Holland* 86 (1971) 3–8; and Ward "Disguised Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism" 39.

devotional books.⁸ Goliath wears a suit of armor. He towers over David, who wears a belted tunic, and motions as though he is about to release his sling. David, like Abraham, was an Old Testament warrior who demonstrated faith in God and triumphed in battle.⁹ Because David Slaying Goliath was paired with Samson Killing the Lion as a prefiguration of the Harrowing of Hell in the *Biblia Pauperum*, the presence of David and Goliath on the capital reinforces the meaning of the grouping of Samson Killing the Lion on the throne.¹⁰

Now we arrive at the central question of this analysis: what is the subject of the battle scene on this capital? Its occurrence within the series of carved scenes indicates that it is an Old Testament story involving faith, victory, and sacrifice. Various identities have been suggested for the warrior on horseback who tramples an enemy. Aquilin Janssens de Bisthoven argued that the carving shows Abraham triumphing over the Elamite kings and liberating Lot.¹¹ This interpretation was accepted by Lawrence Naftulin, Elisabeth Dhanens, and Carol Purtle.¹² But, as John Ward noted, no kings are represented in the scene. One person who is present, however, is a female figure, at the far left. It has been suggested that she is Lot's daughter, but Lot is usually depicted with two daughters instead of one.

⁸ An example may be seen in this prayer book illuminated in Bruges: Master of the Dresden Prayer Book, *Prayer Book* (ca. 1480–1485), Musée Condé, Chantilly MS. 23, fol. 121 v.

⁹ Ward argued that the praying man, to the left of Melchizedek, and another, to the right of David, 'may be understood to foresee the armor provided by Christian faith and reflecting Christ's image'. See: Ward, "Disguised Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism" 40. The two praying men amplify the faith of the heroes depicted in the main scenes on the capitals. David was often shown praying, as he is in a *Bible moralisée* made in Bruges, ca. 1455–1460 (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76 E 7, fol. 92 v). Abraham was sometimes illustrated praying at Hebron, after his separation from Lot, as in the illustration that directly precedes a picture of him meeting Melchizedek, in a *History Bible*, made in Utrecht, around 1430, and illuminated by the Utrecht Bible Masters of the First Generation (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 78 D 38 I, fol. 18 v). Abraham's ally, the King of Sodom, was also sometimes featured praying as Abraham receives Melchizedek's blessing, as in Dieric Bouts the Elder's scene of "The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek" in the *Altarpiece of the Holy Sacrament*, Saint Peter's Church, Leuven. Abraham was pictured standing in prayer by the Rambures Master, in Comestor Peter, *Historia scholastica* (*fragment 1*) (Hesdin or Amiens: ca. 1470), The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, RMMW, 10 A 15 fol. 28 v. I am grateful to Larry Silver for his observations on portrayals of David praying.

¹⁰ *Biblia Pauperum* (The Netherlands: ca. 1475), Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Incun. X B562, fol. 59 r.

¹¹ Bisthoven A.J. de. – Parmentier R.A., *Les Primitifs Flamands, Le Musée Communal de Bruges* (Antwerp: 1951) 36–48.

¹² Naftulin "Note on the Iconography of the Van der Paele Madonna" 3–8; Purtle *The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck* 94; and Dhanens *Hubert and Jan van Eyck* 220.

Further inconsistencies arise when we consider spatial order and chronology. The scenes on the capitals in *The Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rolin* are placed in chronological order, from left to right.¹³ We might also expect the scenes in the Van der Paele Madonna to progress chronologically from left to right. Abraham received Melchizedek's blessing *after* he defeated the Elamite kings, so that battle scene would be out of order. Michael Hitchcock identified the scene as the death of Uriah witnessed by David and Bathsheba.¹⁴ Again, there is a problem of chronology. This event occurred after David slayed Goliath, so we would expect the scenes to be reversed. Ward has argued that the rider is Joshua conquering the land of Canaan.¹⁵ This story fits into the sequence chronologically. But it does not explain the presence of the female figure, nor does it tie in closely with the sacrificial theme of the other carvings.

Who, then, is this warrior? He holds a shield that reiterates a pattern of shields in the picture. Ward noted that the rider's shield is decorated with a face, as is the shield held by Abraham. He suggested that these shields symbolize God's protection.¹⁶ This interpretation agrees with Hitchcock's argument that the Hebrew word 'Adonai' (Lord), which Van Eyck depicted as inscribed on Saint George's breastplate, is an allusion to Paul's advice, in the Letter to the Ephesians, for Christians to clothe themselves in the armor of God and to carry the Shield of Faith.¹⁷ Saint George's shield is at the right edge of the panel. On the adjacent frame is a Latin inscription stating that Saint George 'fought for Christ [...] fleeing the idleness of the world, he triumphed although he was killed. He slew the dragon'.¹⁸ Van Eyck's depiction of the saint as a crusader underscores the characterization of Saint George as a knight of faith who triumphed over evil.

Painted on the corners of the frame are four small shields emblazoned with the crests of the donor's father and mother: Van der Paele and Carlins.¹⁹ These heraldic references to the patron's birth relate to a Latin inscription

¹³ Purtle, *The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck* 75–84.

¹⁴ Hitchcock, *The Iconography of the Van der Paele Madonna* 207–215.

¹⁵ Ward interpreted the woman at the left edge of the scene as 'trying to attract attention to the covered pilaster' to her right, which he speculated is to be understood as bearing an image of Moses. See: Ward, "Disguised Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism" 39–40.

¹⁶ *Ibidem* 39–44.

¹⁷ *Ephesians* 6:13–17. See: Hitchcock, *The Iconography of the Van der Paele Madonna* 20; and Ward "Disguised Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism" 39.

¹⁸ 'NATUS CAPPADOCIA XP[IST]O MILITAVIT – MUNDI FUG[I]E[N]S OCIA – CESUS TRIUMPHAVIT HIC DRACONEM STRAVIT'. Translation: Martens, "Patronage" 374.

¹⁹ Dhanens, *Hubert and Jan van Eyck* 383. On heraldic color symbolism, see Vos D. de, *The Flemish Primitives. The Masterpieces. Robert Campin (Master of Flémalle). Jan van Eyck.*

on the left of the frame, which refers to Saint Donatian's birth: 'From one childbed he was born as the ninth of his brothers. Immersed in water, he was returned alive. Reborn, he became the first Archbishop of Reims. Now he enjoys God'.²⁰ In the picture, Saint Donatian's head appears in front of the first capital in the series, at the far left, where we see Adam and Eve, the parents of the human race. In the next capital to the right, situated between Saint Donatian and the throne, Abraham and his son, Isaac, reiterate the topic of parentage. Could parentage also figure in the unidentified scene on the capital on the other side of the throne? Because the unknown warrior appears directly above Canon van der Paele, he may be someone with whom the donor identified.

One thing that is known about Van der Paele's lineage is that he was an illegitimate son.²¹ His imperfect pedigree gives him something in common with Melchizedek, who, though not identified as illegitimate, is referred to as 'without genealogy' and 'he, whose pedigree is not numbered among them' in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.²² The *Epistle to the Hebrews* is of interest because it was attributed to Saint Paul, to whom the altar in the Van der Paele chapel was dedicated. I think the Epistle is instrumental in understanding Van Eyck's series of stone carvings, because it refers to each of the characters in the carvings, in the exact order in which they appear in the painting.²³ The first chapter of the Epistle refers to the Creation and the fall of Man.²⁴ Chapter two discusses Abraham. Chapter eleven praises

Rogier van der Weyden. *Petrus Christus*. Dieric Bouts. *Hugo van der Goes*. *Hans Memling*. *Gerard David* (Princeton – Amsterdam: 2002) 72.

²⁰ 'SOLOP[AR]TUNON[US]FR[ATRU]M – MERS[US]VIV[US]REDDIT[UR] – RENAT[US]ARCH[IEPISC]O[PUS]PR[IM]US – REMIS CONSTITUITUR – QUI NU[N]C DEO FRUITUR'. Translation: Martens, "Patronage" 366–377. The themes of birth and rebirth in this inscription reinforce the picture's function as an epitaph for the donor.

²¹ Weale W.H.J., "Inventaires du trésor de la collégiale de Saint Donatian à Bruges, 1347–1539", *Le Beffroi* 2 (1864/65) 9–30, 104–138, esp. 28–29; Viaene, "Het grafpaneel van kanunnik van der Paele" 257–264; Keyser, "De Kanunnik Van der Paele" 336–343 and "Paele, Joris Van der", cols. 673–677; Harbison, *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism* 67–70; and Martens, "Patronage" 367.

²² *Hebrews* 7:3: 'Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, continueth a priest forever'. *Hebrews* 7:6: 'But he, whose pedigree is not numbered among them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises'. Several passages in the Epistle stress the priesthood of Christ, who is characterized as being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek in *Hebrews* 5:6, 5:10, 6:20, and 7:1–11.

²³ Order of appearance in the Epistle: Adam and Eve: *Hebrews* 1:10–12, 2:16, 9:15; Abraham: *Hebrews* 2:16; Abel: *Hebrews* 11:4; Samson, Jephthah, David: *Hebrews* 11:32.

²⁴ Adam and Eve are not mentioned by name in the Epistle, but their creation and fall are indicated in the following verses. *Hebrews* 1:10: 'Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth: and the works of thy hands are the heavens'. *Hebrews* 10:39 'But we are

the virtues of Abel, then Samson and David. Throughout the Epistle, these Old Testament heroes are cited as exemplars of faith in God.²⁵

They are lauded in the Epistle as those 'who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, [and] stopped the mouths of lions'.²⁶ The preceding verse names, as men of faith, Samson, Jephthah, and David, in that order. I believe that Jephthah is depicted on the capital above Joris van der Paele. Jephthah was the illegitimate son of an Israelite, who was expelled by his clan after his father's death. Because he was a strong leader, the Israelites recalled Jephthah to lead them in battle after an attack by the Ammonites.²⁷ Like Jephthah, Van der Paele was illegitimate and he, too, was banished from his home for several years. In 1394, the Canon was dismissed from his post at Saint Donatian's because he was loyal to Rome, while Brugge and the Duke of Burgundy supported the Pope of Avignon. Van der Paele left Brugge to work at the papal curia in Rome and was not able to return to his post at Saint Donatian's until the election of Martin V as Pope in 1418.²⁸ The theme of exile unifies all of the stone carvings in Van Eyck's painting: Adam and Eve, Cain, Samson, Abraham, Jephthah, and David were all exiled at some point in their lives.²⁹

not the children of withdrawing unto perdition, but of faith to the saving of the soul'. The depiction of the fall of Man on the capital to the left, above Saint Donatian, initiates the theme of God's binding agreements with humankind. *Hebrews* 9:15 refers to God's vow of redemption to Adam: 'And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance'.

²⁵ *Hebrews* 11:4, 11:8, 11:17–19, and 11:32.

²⁶ *Hebrews* 11:33.

²⁷ Jephthah's people recalled him to 'make him head and captain over them', according to *Judges* 11:11. In the painting, Jephthah appears in a position that reiterates his rank.

²⁸ Pope Urban VI appointed Joris van der Paele canon of the chapter of the church of Saint Donatian in 1387. Following his dismissal in 1394, Van der Paele was appointed scribe at the papal curia in Rome in 1396. In 1410, he was reappointed to the chapter of Saint Donatian by the antipope John XXIII, who had been elected at the council in Basel. In 1418, after the election of Martin V, who was recognized by the entire Western Church, Van der Paele left Rome and returned home to Bruges. See: Martens, "Patronage" 367–369.

²⁹ Adam and Eve were exiled from Eden: *Genesis* 3:23–24. Cain was banished from his home as a vagabond upon the earth: *Genesis* 4:11–16. Abraham was exiled from Ur: *Genesis* 12:1. Samson was exiled to the land of the Philistines: *Judges* 15:12. Jephthah was exiled to the land of Tob: *Judges* 11:7. David fled from Saul and the king of Geth and lived as king in exile: 1 *Samuel* 1–2. The theme of exile also pertains to Christ and Mary, who fled to Egypt: *Matthew* 2:14. More generally, *Hebrews* 11:36–40 expounds on trials of the faithful by banishment:

And others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons. They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death

The story of Jephthah is consistent with the battle imagery on the capital and the female figure on its left edge. The *Book of Judges* states: 'And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then [...] whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return [...] shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering'.³⁰ Jephthah won the battle, but at a great cost. When he returned home, his only child, a thirteen year old daughter, was the first to greet him. When Jephthah saw her, he rent his clothes in anguish.³¹ His daughter submitted to her fate, requesting only a retreat to the mountains with friends to lament her death as a childless virgin. When she returned, Jephthah honored his vow and sacrificed her.³² The young woman depicted on the left side of the capital is Jephthah's daughter. The scene to the right of her shows her father's victory in battle.³³ Jephthah's story relates him and his daughter to the other carved characters in the Van der Paele painting. Jephthah is a victorious hero, like Abraham, Samson, and David. The rending of his clothes parallels Samson's rending of the lion's jaws. The sacrifice of his daughter recalls the sacrifice of Isaac. Isaac was spared, but she, like Abel, was killed.³⁴

Jephthah and his daughter as represented by Van Eyck may have been recognizable to contemporary viewers because of their correspondence

by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted: Of whom the world was not worthy; wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth. And all these being approved by the testimony of faith, received not the promise; God providing some better thing for us, that they should not be perfected without us.

³⁰ *Judges* 11:30–31.

³¹ *Judges* 11:13.

³² *Judges* 11:33–39.

³³ After his daughter's death, Jephthah defeated the Ephraimites, according to *Judges* 12:1–4.

³⁴ Antje Maria Neuner identified a carving on the throne in Jan van Eyck's *Dresden Triptych*, which is usually interpreted as David defeating Goliath, as Jephthah sacrificing his daughter. She related this scene to a sacrificial programme. See: Neuner A.M., "Das geopferte Kind: Ikonographie und Programmatik des Dresdner Marienaltars von Jan van Eyck", *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden* 25 (1994–5) 31–43. The two figures in the Dresden throne carving are consistent in relative scale, position, and dress with contemporary illustrations of David and Goliath, but do not match depictions of Jephthah sacrificing his daughter. In my opinion, the disparity in size between the figures and the short tunic and the twisting pose of the smaller figure indicate that they are David and Goliath.

to fifteenth-century Netherlandish book illustrations of the narrative.³⁵ A *History Bible*, made in Utrecht, shows Jephthah's military triumph over his enemies [Fig. 5].³⁶ The same manuscript depicts his daughter, in a long gown and headdress, greeting him as he rends his clothes [Fig. 6].³⁷ A block book of *The Mirror of Human Salvation*, made in The Netherlands, shows Jephthah, clad in armor and on horseback, sacrificing his daughter upon returning home with his army [Fig. 7].³⁸ Van Eyck's portrayals of Jephthah, in battle, on horseback, wearing armor, and his daughter, in a long gown and a headdress, are consistent with these illustrations.

The placement of Jephthah's daughter on the left edge of the capital redirects our attention to the Virgin Mary. With her left hand, she gestures toward Mary. In this juxtaposition, the daughter complements Eve, who is carved on the throne directly below her, as a prefiguration of the Virgin. In *The Mirror of Human Salvation*, the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter is paired with the Queen of Assyria meditating in the hanging gardens of Babylon [Fig. 7].³⁹ The Queen prefigured Mary, who spent her youth in

³⁵ Van Eyck's depiction of Jephthah's story differs from earlier ones insofar as it does not show him meeting his daughter after the battle, nor does it show her sacrifice. Departures from pictorial tradition are not uncharacteristic of Van Eyck. He deviated from earlier formats in some of the other carved scenes. David and Goliath do not engage across a field, but stand in a pairing. Abraham, clad in armor, stands rather than kneels; and Cain slays Abel with a jawbone, rather than a club. The artist's most notable break with tradition is the overall composition of the painting, featuring the donor and patron saints on the same panel with the Virgin and Child. Martens suggested that the unusual composition intended to gain prestige for the patron by setting a new example for memorial donations. He ascribed the Canon's motivation to his illegitimacy and exile. If Martens' assertion is correct, variations in pictorial format and iconography may have facilitated the strategy to garner attention for the work. See: Martens, "Patronage" 369–372. On Van Eyck's role in transmission of the *sacra conversazione* format to Italy, see Koster M., "Italy and the North: A Florentine Perspective", in Borchert T.-H., *The Age of Van Eyck. The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting 1430–1530* [exh. cat., Bruges, Groeningemuseum] (Ghent – Amsterdam: 2002) 79–90. I am grateful to Ingrid Falque for kindly bringing to my attention a previous examples of donors and saints in the presence of the Virgin and Christ child: *The Brid-Belle Madonna*, made by an unknown artist ca. 1420; a drawing, ca. 1430, attributed to the Master of Flemalle, in the Louvre *Corpus des primitifs flamands*; and carved stone epitaphs produced in Flanders since the mid-fourteenth century. See: Nys L., *Les tableaux votifs tournaisiens en pierre: 1350–1475*, Académie royale de Belgique – Mémoire de la Classe des Beaux-Arts 17 (Bruxelles: 2000), *passim*.

³⁶ *History Bible* (Utrecht: ca. 1430), The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 78 D 38 I, fol. 150v.

³⁷ Ibidem, fol. 150r.

³⁸ *Speculum humanae salvationis* (The Netherlands: ca. 1474–1475), Oxford, The Bodleian Library, Arch. G d. 56, fol. 15r.

³⁹ Ibidem. The blockbook's captions read: 'Jepte obtulit filiam suam domino' ('Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to God') and 'Regina persarum contemplantur patriam suam in orto suspensili' ('the Queen of Persia contemplated her land in a hanging garden'). The



Fig. 5. Bible Master of the First Generation (Utrecht) "The Battle between Jephthah and the Ephraimites", in *History Bible* (ca. 1430). Parchment, 60 × 90 cm. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 78 D 38 I, f. 150r. Image © Koninklijke Bibliotheek.



Fig. 6. Bible Master of the First Generation (Utrecht) "Jephthah, Returning from Victory, Meets his Daughter and Rends his Clothes", in *History Bible* (ca. 1430). Parchment, 65 × 85 cm. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 78 D 38 I, f. 150v. Image © Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

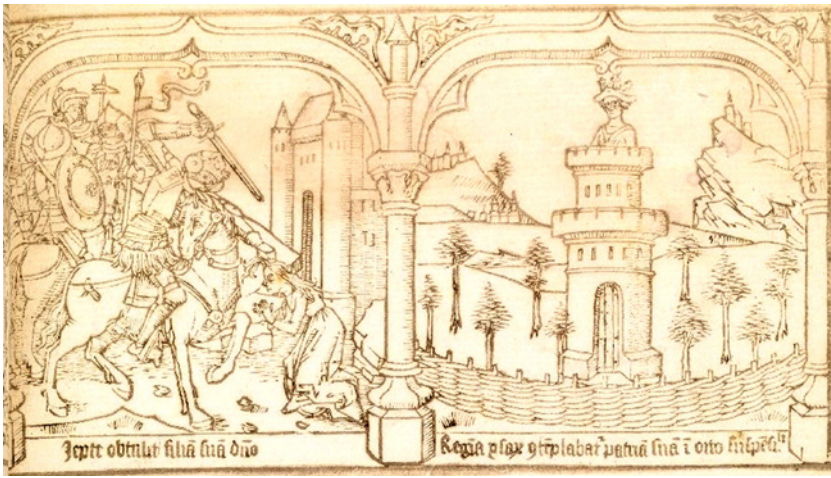


Fig. 7. Anonymous (The Netherlands), woodcut illustration, “Jephthah Sacrifices his Daughter to God” and “The Queen of Persia (*sic*, Babylon) Contemplates her Land in a Hanging Garden”, in *Speculum humanae salvationis* (ca. 1474–1475). Paper, 20.5 × 19.5 cm. Oxford, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Arch. G. d. 56, folio 15 r. Image © The Bodleian Library.

the temple, and ‘ascended always to contemplate the heavenly kingdom’.⁴⁰ By virtue of her own virginity and her identification with the meditating queen, Jephthah’s daughter foreshadowed Mary’s purity and wisdom. Van Eyck emphasized the daughter’s virginity by depicting her in a long robe with her hair encircled by a headdress, similar to the attire of the virgin martyrs on *The Ghent Altarpiece* [Fig. 8]. Her image amplifies the Latin inscription, at the top of the Van der Paele frame, directly above the capital. These verses from the Book of Wisdom pertain to Mary, who is described as ‘the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty’.⁴¹

text erroneously assigned to Queen Semiramis the country of Persia, instead of Babylon, and she is shown not in the hanging gardens, but in a tower in which the queen was said to have been imprisoned.

⁴⁰ Mossman, S., *Marquard von Lindau and the Challenges of Religious Life in Late Medieval Germany: The Passion, the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary* (Oxford: 2010) 252–275, note 159.

⁴¹ The following inscription is on the upper bar of the frame: ‘HEC E[ST] SPECIOSIOR SOLE SUP[ER] O[MN]EM STELLARU[M] DISPOSIC[I]O[N]EM LUCI C[OM]PA[RA]TA I[N] VE[N]ITUR P[RI]OR CA[N]DOR E[ST] ENI[M] LUCIS ETERNE SPEC[U]L[U]M S[I]N[E] MAC[U]LA D[E]I MAJES[TATIS]’. Inscriptions from the Book of Wisdom also appear on the *Ghent Altarpiece*, the *Dresden Triptych*, and the Virgin’s hem in the *Rolin Madonna* and the *Virgin in a Church*, in Berlin. Bret Rothstein explained that the Virgin embodies



Fig. 8. Jan and Hubert van Eyck, “The Virgin Martyrs”, in *The Ghent Altarpiece*, detail (1426–1432). Ghent, St. Baafskathedraal. Image © Sint Baafskathedraal Ghent.

Stephen Hanley suggested that Van Eyck articulated the concept of Mary as one who magnifies God in the lens of the canon’s reading glasses, which magnifies the text on the page beneath it [Fig. 9].⁴² The page begins with a decorated letter ‘D’, which may be the first letter of the word ‘Domine’. Purtle asserted that, in Van Eyck’s Rolin Madonna, the initial ‘D’ in the donor’s open book represents the first word in the Little Office of the Virgin for the hour of Matins.⁴³ This prayer begins: ‘O Lord, open my lips. And my mouth shall proclaim your praise’. The same prayer is evoked by the ‘D’ in Van der Paele’s book. Here, the prayer also alludes to Jephthah,

divine wisdom and asserted that her brilliance exceeds the capacity of mortal senses and can be grasped only through the contemplation of higher things. See: Rothstein B., “Vision and devotion in Jan van Eyck’s *Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*”, *Word & Image* 15 (1999) 262–275.

⁴² Hanley S., “Optical Symbolism as Optical Description: A Case Study of Canon Van der Paele’s Spectacles”, *Journal of Historians of Early Netherlandish Art* 1,1 (2009) n.p. [electronic journal www.jhna.org]. This article stemmed from Hanley, S. *The Optical Concerns of Jan van Eyck’s Painting Practice* (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of York: 2007).

⁴³ Purtle, *The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck* 67–68. On the texts embroidered into Mary’s hem, see Roosen-Runge H., *Die Rolin Madonna des Jan van Eyck* (Wiesbaden: 1972) 31.



Fig. 9. Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*, detail (1436). Bruges, Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum. Image © Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.

who appears on the carved capital directly above the capital letter. The name Jephthah means 'one who opened his mouth'. Jephthah opened his mouth to the Lord when he vowed to make a sacrifice. The ninth-century theologian, Rabanus Maurus, identified Jephthah with Christ, explaining: 'his name means "opening"'. For our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Gospel

indicates, opened to his disciples the meaning of the Scriptures, that they might understand them'.⁴⁴

Van Eyck's rendering of the Old Testament scenes in colorless stone – within the larger, colorful context of Christian saints – evokes Paul's assertion in *Corinthians* that 'the letter killeth but the spirit quickeneth'.⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas explained Paul's dictum as meaning 'that the letter denotes any writing external to man, even that of the moral precepts [...] contained in the Gospel [...] the letter, even of the Gospel would kill, unless there were the inward presence of the healing grace of faith'.⁴⁶ Because Paul identified Abel, Abraham, Samson, Jephthah, and David as exemplars of faith, their presence in Van Eyck's painting suggests that Joris van der Paele attained the healing grace of faith needed to understand the meaning of Scripture. Gregory the Great set forth a three-stage process for such understanding: 'First, we lay the historical foundations; Next, by pursuing the typical sense, we erect a fabric of the mind to be a strong hold of faith; [...] the last step, by the grace of moral instruction [is to] [...] clothe the edifice with an overcast of coloring'.⁴⁷ Van der Paele's devout posture, book, and concentrated expression indicate moral instruction. The painting's coloring and symbolism suggest that he internalized the lessons of faith embodied in the grisaille stone figural types for Christ, and thus, clothed the historical edifice of Scripture with spiritual coloring.

Jephthah is a nexus between the letter 'D' in the Canon's book, the letter of scriptural text signified in the carved scenes, and spiritual coloring

⁴⁴ Rabanus Maurus, *Comment. In Lib. Judicum*, in Migne J.-P. – Hamman A. – G., *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina* (henceforth *PL*), vol. 108 (Paris: 1844) 1185.

⁴⁵ 2 *Corinthians* 3:6.

⁴⁶ Aquinas T., *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. D. Sullivan, Great Books of the Western World 20 (Chicago: 1952) 323 (q. 106, a. 2).

⁴⁷ Gregory the Great elaborated:

But be it known that there are some parts, which we go through in a historical exposition, some we trace out in allegory upon an investigation of the typical meaning, some we open in the lessons of moral teaching alone, allegorically conveyed, while there are some few which, with more particular care, we search out in all these ways together, exploring them in a threefold method.

See: Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job by St. Gregory the Great, Volume I, Part 1*, trans. J.H. Parker (London: 1844) 7. Ter Doest abbey library contained a twelfth-century manuscript of this text: Bruges, Openbare Bibliotheek Brugge, MSS. 140, 141, and 142; Poorter A. de, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Publique de la Ville de Bruges, Catalogue général des manuscrits des Bibliothèques de Belgique, Tome 2* (Gembloux – Paris: 1934) 184–185; and Isaac M.-T., *Les Livres Manuscrits de l'Abbaye des Dunes d'après le Catalogue du XVII^e siècle* (Aubel: 1984) 114–115.

signified in the colorful imagery of the Christian saints in the foreground. Adam, Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Samson, and David all foreshadow Christ, but it is Jephthah, whose name means 'opening', who signals that Christ will open the meaning of their stories. In the twelfth century, Godefridus of Admont related the meaning of Jephthah's name to his daughter's sacrifice and, thereby, to Christ's death: 'Jephthah indicates Christ through whose blood Paradise is opened to the faithful'.⁴⁸ The Venerable Bede, Rabanus Marus, Hugh of Saint Victor, and Walafridus Strabus compared Jephthah to Christ and identified his daughter with Christ's flesh and blood.⁴⁹ The carving of Abel evokes the identification of Jesus in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* as 'the mediator of the new covenant' whose blood 'speaketh better things than that of Abel'.⁵⁰ *Hebrews* also states that resurrection was made possible through 'the everlasting covenant of Christ's blood'.⁵¹ Whereas Abel's blood cried out for revenge, Christ's blood cried out for forgiveness, opening the way to resurrection. Thus, the old covenant of the letter was replaced with the new covenant of the spirit through Christ's blood.

Van Eyck signified Christ's blood and alluded to resurrection in the image of Saint George's shield. At its crest, the shield reflects Saint George's attribute, a banner with a red cross on a white field, which was identified theologically with Christ's resurrection, and served as the standard of the *miles Christi* ('soldier of Christ').⁵² The base of the shield [Fig. 10] reflects a column, an object often included in depictions of Passion instruments.⁵³

⁴⁸ Ven. Godefridi Abbatis Admontensis opera omnia, in *PL*, vol. 174 (Paris: 1844) 33–34.

⁴⁹ Venerabilis Bedae anglo-Saxonis Presbyteri opera omnia, *PL*, vol. 93 (Paris: 1844–1864) 428; Rabanus Maurus Comment. In Lib. Judicum, in *PL*, vol. 108 (Paris: 1844) 1177–1178; Hugonis de S. Victore Canonici Regularis S. Victoris Parisiensis, in *PL*, vol. 175 (Paris: 1844) 680.; and Walafridi Strabonis Fuldensis Monachi opera omnia, in *PL*, vol. 113 (Paris: 1844) 530.

⁵⁰ *Hebrews* 12:24.

⁵¹ *Hebrews* 13:20: 'Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant [...]'

⁵² Schiller G., *Iconography in Christian Art*, trans. J. Seligman, 2 vols. (Greenwich: 1972) II 184–189. Saint George was often depicted carrying a white shield with a red cross, as in a prayer book illuminated in Bruges ca. 1401–1415 (London, British Library, Royal Ms. 2 A XVIII, fol. 5 v). See: Smeyers M. et al., *Der Natueren Gelyke: Vlaamse miniature voor Van Eyck (ca. 1350–ca. 1420)* (Leuven: 1993) 111, fig. 31. The saint appears on the *Ghent Altarpiece* interior carrying a similarly emblazoned banner and shield.

⁵³ The red color of this column is consistent with depictions of the flagellation showing Christ bound to a red column, such as the *Flagellation* painted ca. 1440 by an unknown master in the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves* (New York, Guennol Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Library, fol. 60 v). See: Plummer J. (ed.), *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves* (New York: 1966), plate 22.



Fig. 10. Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*, detail (1436). Bruges, Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.
Image © Musea Brugge, Groeningemuseum.

The red column recalls a description of Christ being flagellated at a column smeared with his blood in the *Rijmbijbel*, written by the famous Middle Dutch poet Jacob van Maerlant.⁵⁴ Maerlant also characterized Christ's

⁵⁴ 'Die colume staet noch besmet Met Sinen bloed, daer Hi an stoet'. See: David J. (ed.), *Rijmbijbel van Jacob van Maerlant*, vol. II (Brussels: 1859) 655, lines 26379–26383 [CD-Rom Middel Nederlands (The Hague-Antwerp: 1998)].

blood as a colorant in a poem about the Holy Land, wherein he urged crusader knights to 'carry the shield that Christ colored with his red blood' and exhorted Christians to 'take up the vermilion shield that Jesus bore' at his crucifixion.⁵⁵

The fourteenth-century poet of the Hague court, Willem van Hildegasberch, allegorized Christ's wounded body as a marked shield, stating that, with his wounds, Christ gave worshipers a shield marked with five signs.⁵⁶ This concept is illustrated in fifteenth-century Netherlandish devotional books that feature depictions of the Holy Wounds on shields.⁵⁷ The Van der Paele shield, emblazoned through mirroring, with red emblems of Christ's sacrifice, reformulates the devotional trope of the crucified Christ as a shield colored with blood and reinforces the concept of Christ's blood as an agent of coloring.

David Carter, and others, argued that Saint George's shield reflects the artist, who is clad in a red turban and red stockings.⁵⁸ The painter, or *schilder*, in fifteenth-century Dutch usage, presented himself reflected on

⁵⁵ 'So moeti den schilt draghen, Dien God veruwede met roder greine'. See: "Van den Lande van Oversee", in Mierlo J. van (ed.), *Uit de Strophische Gedichten van Jacob van Maerlant*, *Klassiken uit de Nederlandse letterkunde* uitgegeven in opdracht van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden, Nr. 3 (Zwolle: 1954) 142–159, esp. 157 (verse 18, lines 229–230). 'Neemt den schilt vermilioene, Die Jhesus droech omtrent noene Op den goeden Vridach'. See: *ibidem* (verse 17, lines 209–211).

⁵⁶ Hildegasberch W. van, *Gedichten van Willem van Hildegasberch*, ed. W. Bisschop – E. Verwijs ('s-Gravenhage: 1870), ch. 69, lines 14–17, 20–24, 32–36, 50–52 [CD-Rom Middel Nederlands].

⁵⁷ A fifteenth-century Psalter, made in North Holland, ca. 1455–1465, features an initial 'V' in which an angel holds a shield displaying the Holy Wounds (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 133, M 1, fol. 83 v). On this folio, the inscription 'gode onsen helper' recalls the trope of the Lord as a helper and a shield in Psalm 32. A *Book of Hours* made in the same region, ca. 1450–1500, contains a full page depiction of a shield emblazoned with five bleeding wounds (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 78 J 7, fol. 95 v).

⁵⁸ Carter D., "Reflections in Armor in the Canon van der Paele Madonna", *The Art Bulletin* 36 (1954) 60–62. Carter also observed (note 4) that the artist's reflection is visible in the copy of Van Eyck's painting, now in Antwerp. Also see: Farmer D., "Further Reflections on a Van Eyck Self-Portrait", *Oud Holland* 83 (1968) 160. Farmer noted the presence of two or three additional figures reflected in the shield along with Van Eyck. In 1565 the Ghent painter and poet Lucas de Heere wrote that Van Eyck's paintings were mirrors, not painted panels, 'Tsijn spieghels, en gheen gheschilderde tafereelen'. See: Heere L. de, *Den Hof en Boomgaard der Poësie*, ed. W. Waterschoot (Zwolle: 1969) 30, line 24. Dutch etymologists have established that the Dutch term 'schilderie' had, by the sixteenth century, come into usage as a reference to the naturalistic style of painting that Van Eyck pioneered. See the entry 'SCHILDERIE', in Verwijs E. – Verdam J., *Middel Nederlandsch Woordenboek*, 11 vols. ('s-Gravenhage: 1882–1952) n.p. [Cd-Rom Middel Nederlands]. On the usage of the terms *schilder*, *schilderij*, and *schilderen* in the seventeenth century, see Pauw De-Veen L., *De begrippen 'schilder', 'schilderij' en 'schilderen' in de zeventiende eeuw*, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Schone Kunsten, Jaargang 31, Nr. 22 (Brussels: 1969), *passim*.

a *schild*, or shield, with tokens of Christ's Passion. This imagery bespeaks Van Eyck's artistic emulation of Christ, who metaphorically painted a shield with his blood.⁵⁹ The shield's symbolism reinforces the sacrificial theme articulated by the Eucharistic presentation of Christ on the altar-like lap of the enthroned Virgin, the processional cross held by Saint Donatian, and the Old Testament stories of sacrifice.

The Old Testament heroes are precursors of the Christian knight, Saint George. Christ was also characterized as a knight in Northern devotional literature.⁶⁰ An anonymous Dutch version of *The Mirror of Human Salvation*, made around 1410, identifies Jesus as a 'faithful knight', stating that his shield was 'the blessed cross'⁶¹ and his 'shield-bearer' was Mary, 'who

⁵⁹ In my dissertation and conference papers, I have argued that Van Eyck identified the wounded Christ as an exemplar for realist oil painting: Smith J.L., "The Divine Self-Portrait in Northern Devotion: Petrus Christus's *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*", Philadelphia Symposium of Art History, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2003; *'So moeti den schilt draghen, Dien God veruwede met roder greine': Jan van Eyck's Critical Principles of Oil Painting and Their Middle Dutch Antecedents* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University: 2008); and *"Als Ich Can: Poetic Origins of Jan van Eyck's Device Elucidate Artistic Identity in The Madonna with Canon Van der Paele"*, College Art Association Annual Conference, Los Angeles, 2009.

⁶⁰ Augustine's commentary on *Psalm 44* is a possible source for this theme. See: Augustine of Hippo, "Enarratio in Psalmum 44", in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi opera omnia*, PL, vol. 36 (Paris: 1865) 493–514. Also see: Woolf R., "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature", *Review of English Studies* 13 (1962) 1–16, esp. 3. The Old Saxon poem *Heiland* characterizes Christ as a feudal lord with saints as vassals. On the *Heiland's* impact, see Verdam J., *Uit de Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Taal* (Zutphen: 1923) 34; Mierlo J. van, *Beknopte geschiedenis van de Oud- en Middelnederlandsche Letterkunde* (Brussels – 's Hertogenbosch: 1942) 17–18; and Oostrom F.P. van, "Slots-beschouwing: de *Rijmbijbel*, balans en perspectief", in Moolenbroek J. van – Mulder M. (eds.), *Scolastica willic ontbinden. Over de Rijmbijbel van Jacob van Maerlant* (Hilversum: 1991) 132.

⁶¹ This trope was disseminated in Latin, German, and Dutch texts of the *Mirror of Human Salvation*. In 1449, Philip the Good commissioned a French translation from Jehan Miélot. One chapter presents an analogical pairing of the romance episode of the general Antipater showing his wounds to Julius Caesar with an apocryphal narration of Christ showing his wounds to God the Father. The premise of this comparison is that, just as Antipater was rewarded by Caesar for fighting bravely, Christ was knighted by God for his sacrifice on the cross. This concept is illustrated on fol. 78 r: "Jésus-Christ montrant ses plaies à Dieu; Antipater montrant ses plaies à Jules César". See: "Notice 308 Ms. 9249–60", in Lyna F., *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Tome 3, Deuxième partie* (Brussels: 1989) 453–455. A Dutch version of this text described Christ as 'Dese ghetrouwe rudder (ridder) cristus' and the cross as 'dat ghebenedide cruus'. See: *Speculum humanae salvationis*, London, British Library, Add. 11575, 1400 – 1420, ch. 39, 100c, line 6; and Daniels L.M. (ed.), *De spiegel der menscheliker behoudenisse. De Middelnederlandsche vertaling van het Speculum Humanae Salvationis. Naar het handschrift uitgegeven, ingeleid en toegelicht* (Tiel: 1949) 226, 228 [CD-Rom Middelnederlands]. Despite *lacunae* (ibidem, ch. 39, 101a, lines 21–26), the insertion of 'schilt' (shield) is substantiated by a verse

carried his arms with great bitter pain and compassion in her heart'.⁶² These 'arms' can be understood as Christ's weapons, and also as his armorial bearings, or the *arma Christi*.⁶³ A prayer book made in the South Netherlands, ca. 1500, conveys this concept in an initial letter 'O', which contains a shield emblazoned with instruments of the Passion: the cross, the lance, the sponge, and the ladder [Fig. 11].⁶⁴ At the top of the folio, an inscription refers to 'the arms of our beloved lord', reinforcing the image's heraldic symbolism and designating the shield as Christ's coat-of-arms.⁶⁵ Van Eyck placed Saint George's shield in a typical heraldic format. Its position, beneath a helmet and a banner, echoes heraldic images in armorial registers.⁶⁶ The grouping of shield, helmet, and banner figures an armorial display featuring a coat-of-arms with a red cross on a white field, which is displayed in the saint's banner and is reflected on the surface of the shield.

Van Eyck situated the shield signifying Christ's coat of arms between Van der Paele's family crests, on the upper and lower corners of the frame. The column reflected on the shield may allude to the paternal crest through its relation to the name Paele, because the Dutch word 'pael' means pole or pillar.⁶⁷ Coats of arms were used as signatory seals and, therefore, convey authentication and signify legitimacy.⁶⁸ Van Eyck's imagery suggests that, although Van der Paele was of illegitimate birth, he attained legitimacy

in a German translation referring to the cross as a 'schilt' and 'boekeleet' (buckler). See: Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 79 2, fol. 79 r a).

⁶² London, British Library, Add. 11575, ch. 39, 101a, lines 39–44; 101b, lines 1–2.

⁶³ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* II 184–195, figs. 717–811. On Mary's role as co-redemptrix in the writings of Pseudo-Albert's *Mariale*, see Mossman, *Marquard von Lindau and the Challenges of Religious Life* 96.

⁶⁴ The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 131 H. 12, fol. 160 r.

⁶⁵ Ibidem: 'Die wapenen ons liefs heren'.

⁶⁶ See the arms of Flanders in the *Wapenboek van Gelre*, a manuscript accessible to van Eyck at the Hague court: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique MS 15652–56, fol. 80 r; and "Notice 157", in Gaspar C. – Lyna F., *Les Principaux manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, Deuxième partie (Bruxelles: 1984) 78. Also see: Oostrom F.P., *Court and Culture: Dutch Literature 1350–1450*, trans. A.J. Pomerans (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 1992) 130–133.

⁶⁷ Verwijs – Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek*, entry 'PAEL' [CD-Rom Middelnederlands].

⁶⁸ Maxwell R.A., "Sealing Signs and the Art of Transcribing in the Vierzon Cartulary", *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999) 576–597; Steiner E., *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: 2003) 245. It is my view that the shield with Jan van Eyck's self-portrait painted on its reflective surface operates as an artist's seal authenticating the picture. See: Smith, "So moeti den schilt draghen; Dien God veruowede met roder greine 70–131. On the significance of Van Eyck's signatory inscriptions, see Smith J.L., "Als Ich Can: How Jan van Eyck Extended the Vernacular from Dutch Poetry to Oil Painting",



Fig. 11. Anonymous (South Netherlands). Initial 'O' in *Prayer Book* (ca. 1500) Parchment, detail. Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS. 131 H 12, f. 16or. Image © Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

in his service to the church and in his devotional life. The picture conveys that, by following the examples of Christ, Saint George, and the Old Testament heroes, he became a knight of faith. Images of Jephthah, his daughter, the Virgin Mary, and symbols of Christ's blood indicate that the donor strove, with purity and meditation, to understand the spiritual meanings of scripture, and to attain the promise of resurrection in the

in Keizer J. – Richardson T. (eds.), *The Transformation of Vernacular Expression in Early Modern Arts*, *Intersections* 19 (Leiden: 2012) 273–312.

New Covenant through the Eucharistic rites and prayers performed in his memory in his family burial chapel.⁶⁹

Though the Church of Saint Donatian was destroyed by the French in the early nineteenth century, Martens presented archival evidence that Van der Paele's memorial panel was originally installed on the west wall of the Van der Paele family chapel.⁷⁰ In the painting, the lighting that appears to illuminate the scene from the left is consistent with the natural light that came into the chapel from the window on the south wall. If the panel did hang on the chapel's west wall, the figure of Van der Paele would have faced the altar and the altarpiece, which probably contained an image of Saint Paul. Van Eyck's depiction of the canon would, then, have placed him in between an image of Saint Paul, in front of him in the chapel, and the Old Testament narratives that recall the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, painted carved in stone behind him.⁷¹ The topics derived from Paul's attributed writing augmented the subject of the altarpiece. Situated among Van Eyck's portrayal of Old Testament heroes behind him, and saints gathered around him, Joris van der Paele assumed his own place as a fixture in the colored edifice of Saint Donatian's church, a new exemplar of faith and spiritual understanding.

⁶⁹ *Hebrews* 6:1–2. On Mary as an exemplar of mediation see: Mossman, *Marquard von Lindau and the Challenges of Religious Life* 252–275; 297–298.

⁷⁰ The deed to the foundation that Van der Paele established at Saint Donatian's in 1440 (see note 3 above) refers to the canon's tombstone as located 'in the nave, on the north side of the altar of Saints Peter and Paul'. The eighteenth-century archeologist Pierre de Molo recorded that Van der Paele was buried in the second chapel in the direction of the Burg at the time Van Eyck's painting was displayed in the chapel. Martens argued convincingly that the grave lay to the left of the altar of the second chapel from the transept, in the south side aisle. Martens, "Patronage" 369–370.

⁷¹ *Hebrews* 9:9–11 emphasizes the exemplary pattern of divine things, stating that the first tabernacle was a figure for the more perfect tabernacle yet to come. The Epistle relates that the new covenant was perfect, whereas the first covenant was not, and specifies, in *Hebrews* 9:23, that the perfection of the new covenant was achieved by the sacrifice of Christ's blood. The carved stone shields of Old Testament warriors that Van Eyck depicted in grisaille on the capitals prefigured the saint's shield colored with Christ's blood. The patriarchs' shields allude to the first covenant and Saint George's shield evokes the crucifixion, wherein Christ's blood legitimized a more perfect covenant. For an expanded discussion, see Smith "So moeti den schilt draghen; Dien God veruwede met roder greine", ch. 2.

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TYPOLOGY AT ITS LIMITS:
VISUAL EXEGESIS AND ESCHATOLOGY IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Giovanni Careri

Typology is a central device in the Sistine chapel frescoes of the fifteenth century where it works, in a quite canonical way, as a model of historical temporality with strong institutional effects. In the frescoes by Luca Signorelli and Bartolomeo della Gatta representing various episodes from the life of Moses, including his death, every gesture and action of Moses is an announcement – a *figura* – of Jesus Christ's institutional accomplishments represented on the opposite wall [Fig. 1]. Some of these devices operate on a figural level rather than in mere iconographical terms; the death of Moses, for instance, is a *Pathosformel*: the leader of the Israelites dies in the pose of the dead body of Christ, while his attendants adumbrate the Lamentation of Christ. Here, the attitude of the defunct Moses is 'intensified' by the return of the pathetic formula embodied by Christ's



Fig. 1. Luca Signorelli and Bartolomeo della Gatta, *Last Acts and Death of Moses* (1480–1482). Oil on panel, 21.6 × 48 cm. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

corpse, that is, by the paradoxical return of the figure who is prefigured by Moses himself.

As Leopold Ettlinger extensively showed, the main ideological purpose of the Quattrocento cycle is to support and incontrovertibly to adduce papal primacy.¹ Nevertheless, if we look at these frescoes from an anthropological point of view, we are compelled to observe the extent to which they appropriate the history of the 'Other' – in this case the history of the Jews – entirely transforming it into a sort of prophetic premise for Christian history itself. That is to say that Christian typology presents itself as objective and neutral, concealing the violence of the claim it exercises over Jewish history. This aspect of the chapel remains implicit in my essay, even if I cannot fully explore it here.² The question I shall pose is rather: what happens to visual typology at the moment that precedes the end of time, when there is nothing else to announce since human history has been nearly concluded, its forward motion all but foreclosed? What licenses such an abstract and speculative question is the singularly concrete history of the creation of the Sistine Chapel. The chapel was progressively painted in three main phases: first the *historie* of Moses and Christ (1480–1482), then the Genesis cycle on the vault (1508–1512), and finally the *Last Judgment* (1536–1541). These three cycles – connected in various ways by narrative, allegorical, and figural links – articulate the totality of Christian history starting with the Genesis, continuing with Moses and Christ, and culminating in the Last Judgment. One single and singular artist, Michelangelo Buonarroti, was confronted twice with the task of visually constructing the *links* between the three sets of the Sistine frescoes: the first time in 1508, when he added the frescoed vault to the Quattrocento program, and a second time in 1536, when he added the *Last Judgment* to the whole. I will focus my attention on the last part of this linking operation of 'montage', looking at the Sistine frescoes from the point of view of the *Last Judgment*. This anachronistic perspective is founded theologically on the primacy of the future in the Messianic conception of history that organizes the Sistine chapel. Only at its end shall Christian history become completely intelligible. Yet, my question makes sense only if one acknowledges that the last element added to the ensemble

¹ Ettlinger L.D., *The Sistine Chapel before Michelangelo. Religious Imagery and Papal Primacy* (Oxford: 1965).

² This part of my research will be published in a forthcoming book. On the 'ideology' of typology, see Ohly F., "Typologie als Denkform des Gesichtsbetrachtung", in Bohn V. (ed.) *Typologie Internationale Beiträge zur Poetik* (Frankfurt: 1988) 22–63.

had the power to produce a transformation in what was already there, reorienting its meaning in the manner that the last page of some novels or the last scene of some films transform what has come before.

The first step in the visual 'montage' of sacred history was the operation that linked the Quattrocento frescoes to their counterparts in the vault. In the cycle of Moses and Christ, the perspective construction and the Albertian model of narration known as *istoria* articulate the structure of typology. Even though every fresco, rather than being unified into a single story as prescribed by Alberti, contains three episodes from the life of Moses or Christ, the internal articulation of each episode obeys to the rules of the *istoria*, and as such, is composed of clear and easily intelligible gestures centering on a key event. When we now look at the vault, we immediately see that the portion of space reserved for the Genesis *istorie* is equal if not inferior to the portion of space occupied by Prophets and Sibyls. This 'prophetic frame' encourages us to view these histories of human origin in two complementary ways: as events belonging to the past and as announcements of the future history of humanity. Sibyls and Prophets should thus be seen as figures of the exegetical work of interpretation that negotiates between the past and the future. As Edgar Wind observed, they may be seen as striving to connect the episodes from Genesis to the future history of Christianity, through the mediation of their sacred books.³ It is interesting to note that the passionately exegetical work of the Sibyls and the Prophets is in process so that we cannot definitively know its results. This may be an allusion to, or better, a symptom of the crisis of medieval exegesis, and seen in this way, an expression of reflexive self-questioning as regards exegetical interpretation itself, which is here bodied forth by the prophets as effortful, uncertain, and even troubling.

Coming back to the transition from the Quattrocento frescoes to the vault, we could say that the importance of the prophetic frame produces an interesting double effect: the exegetical status of the Genesis *istorie* is strongly affirmed, and the orientation of human history toward its future is thereby augmented, becoming more visible than it is in the Quattrocento frescoes.⁴ Here, as we have seen, the histories of Moses adumbrate Christ's achievements and prepare for the future achievements of the Popes, proxies for Peter, in the papal function conferred on him by the Savior.

³ Wind E., "Michelangelo's Prophets and Sibyls", in Sears E. (ed.), *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo: The Sistine Ceiling* (New York: 2000) 139, note 48.

⁴ See Leader A., "Michelangelo's Last Judgement: the Culmination of Papal Propaganda in the Sistine Chapel", *Studies in Iconography* 27 (2006) 103–156.

Past, present, and future, as articulated by typological devices, are therefore conceived in institutional terms rather than in a purely prophetic perspective. In a very broad sense, I would argue that the Quattrocento fresco's dominant temporality is that of the present of papal sovereignty, whereas prophetic insight and the Messianic dimension of the future predominate in the vault. In this transition, the status of the *istoria* as an objective model of historical narration changes, since the Genesis stories are presented as objects of inspired interpretation rather than as mere narrative accounts of the past. The histories of Moses and of Jesus are objects of exegesis, of course, and specifically of typological exegesis, but here the 'results' of the exegesis are a given. They are affirmed at two levels: first by the Latin *tituli* that not only indicate the subjects of the typological relation but also suggest the rule of visual typology as such, by reference to the authoritative relation between the texts written in capitals and the fresco's images.⁵ The second expression of the given exegetical structure is the correspondence between paired images: *The Baptism of Christ* by Perugino on the right wall, for example, is a response to the *Circumcision of Moses' Son*, as a *titulus* on the left wall announces ('Observatio antique regenerationis a Moises per circoncisiones'). When we turn to the vault, on the other hand, we are free to speculate on the typological connections between, say, the Deluge and Baptism, for the structure of the relation between the frame and the stories not only does not guide the interpretation, as the *tituli* do, but leaves it conspicuously open.

In the passage from the walls to the vault, the authoritative foundation of papal sovereignty in the present is replaced by the Messianic orientation toward the historical accomplishment of the biblical prophecies. In

⁵ The list of these captions reveals the systematic application of the typological device:

Left wall:

1. 'Observatio antique regenerationis a Moises per circoncisiones'.
2. 'Temptatio Moisi legis scriptae latoris'.
3. 'Congregatio populi a Moise legem scriptam accepturi'.
4. 'Promulgatio legis scripte per Moisem'.
5. 'Conturbatio Moisi legis scriptae latoris'.
6. 'Replicatio legis scriptae a Moise'.

Right wall:

1. 'Institutio novae regenerationis a Christo in Baptismo'.
2. 'Temptatio Iesu Christi latoris evangelicae legis'.
3. 'Congregatio populi legem evangelicam accepturi'.
4. 'Promulgatio evangelicae legis per Christum'.
5. 'Conturbatio Iesu Christi legislatoris'.
6. 'Replicatio legis evangelicae a Christo'.

other words, the passage from the walls to the vault corresponds to a first important reorientation of Christian history towards the future; the second one consists in the dramatic shift from the vault to the *Last Judgment*. Before proposing some reflections on this shift or transit, I would like to stress an important methodological point: what I am doing here, is not analyzing the content of the historical narration of each part of the whole, but comparing the visual *forms* of these narrations. The 'montage' of the Sistine chapel is a complex system of passages from one model of visual history to another. The model of historicity in the vault implies a profound modification of the rules upon which the historicity of the fresco scenes on the lateral walls are founded. Looking at the vault as the place where the historical rules of the Quattrocento frescoes are transformed means conferring a profound historical meaning upon the formal work accomplished by Michelangelo. Why 'historical': in the sense that the vault modifies the rules of the visual construction of history and strongly augments the projective power of typology in a Messianic perspective founded on prophecy, but not assured in its results by any authority. Sibyls and Prophets strive to authorize their prophecies and exegetical activity by recourse to sacred books, but as I have stressed, prophesy and exegesis are open to results that are neither fully known nor predetermined.⁶

Michelangelo spent four years in the chapel painting the vault (1508–1512) and five more working on the *Last Judgment* (1536–1541); this situation of extended voluntary imprisonment within a site requiring extensively to be painted site is quite unique, and we can be sure that Michelangelo not only memorized the ensemble of the images to which he had privileged and continuous access, but also conceived and articulated the differences between them. This condition has been interpreted as an occasion for competition, firstly with the Quattrocento artists and then with himself. This agonistic perspective may be seen to accord with the status of Michelangelo as an artist, provided that it does not prevent us from construing his work in another perspective as a series of deliberative formal breaks. My hypothesis is that these ruptures are not mere affirmations of a new 'style', but on the contrary, meaningful transformations operating in a register of articulation that I propose to describe as a form of 'montage'. In the passage from the vault to the altar fresco, this

⁶ On the increasing importance of prophetic discourse in Rome at the beginning of the fifteenth century, see Reeves M. (ed.), *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period* (Oxford: 1992).

articulation produces a radically new transformation of the typological model, breaking with the Albertian model of *istoria*. One might say, perhaps not too glibly, that in the *Last Judgment* the end of human history implies the end of the *istoria* as a visual historical model: *fine della storia / fine della istoria*. It has often been noticed that the altar fresco has no frame, that its spatial configuration is not unified by perspective, and that its temporality is open, or more precisely, determined by a constellation of actions in progress [Fig. 2].⁷ My claim is that a crucial role in the organization of space and time is played by the well-known serpentine posture typical of Michelangelo's bodies: a serpentine form that seems to propagate itself, passing from the twisted athletic posture of the Christ to that of the elect and the saints. The temporal and spatial determination of the fresco excludes any predetermined space, and nor does it accommodate anything like a canonical construction of perspective; its configuration should be viewed as processual, in that it involves the *production* of spatio/temporal layers, resulting in a construction wherein time and space cannot be separated as both are generated by the movements of the bodies. This spatiality is comparable to that of a bas-relief, for in both cases space and time are not given a priori, but as Giulio Carlo Argan has written, are 'conquered on the surface *per via di levare*'.⁸

In the Last Judgment, the *forma serpentinata* ('serpentine form') substitutes for perspective as the matrix of space and time. Foreshortening and *terribilità*, along with the propagation of the serpentine form, cause time and space to contract. We could describe this 'contraction' as *praesens*, the Latin formula for 'present', with regard to which Emile Benveniste offers an illuminating and pertinent definition: *praesens* is 'non pas proprement "ce qui est là" mais ce qui est "à l'avant de moi", donc imminent, urgent [...] ce qui est *praesens* ne souffre pas de délai (*deiculae*), n'est pas séparé par un intervalle du moment où l'on parle'⁹ (*praesens* is 'not really "what is here" but "what is before me", thereby imminent, urgent [...] what is *praesens* does not imply a delay, is not separated by an interval from the moment in which I speak').

⁷ This new organisation of time and space has often been criticised. A French traveller in the eighteenth century, wrote for example that 'almost everyone agrees that they see in this painting nothing but a mass of figures without order' ('presque tout le monde s'accorde à ne voir dans cette peinture qu'un amas de figures sans ordre'); see Bergeret de Grancourt J.O., *Voyage en Italie (1773–74), avec les dessins de Fragonard. Introduction et notes de Jacques Wilhelm* (Paris: 1948) 94.

⁸ Argan G.C. – Contardi B., *Michelangelo* (Florence: 1987) 6.

⁹ Benveniste E., "Le système sublogique des prépositions en latin", in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, vol. I (Paris: 1966) 135.



Fig. 2. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Last Judgment* (1536–1541). Fresco, altar wall. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

There is a meaningful link between this sense of *praesens* and the *praesentia* of Christ that inform the Latin Vulgate's usage of the term *adventus*; indeed, this notion allows us more fully to apprehend the notional link between presence and evidence in the fresco. In giving a serpentine form to the 'coming into presence' of Christ, Michelangelo gives to his posture the power to enact and to organize a field of forces: the ascendant rise of the elected, as opposed to the fall of the damned fall, is engendered by the commanding gesture of Christ. His twisted torso is the model for the twisting bodies of the elect: those who enact a rotational movement are becoming like unto the serpentine figure of Christ, while those who are definitely loosing their likeness to the Savior assume the animal features

of Minos. In reference to Saint Paul's anthropology of the resurrection, I would use the Greek term *symmorphon* to describe this process of taking or loosing likeness.¹⁰ *Symmorphon* has been translated as 'conformation', a term that indicates the process by which the elect are incorporated into Christ's body and participate in his likeness. It goes without saying that a broad discussion of taking or loosing likeness as a principle of the Christian anthropology and as a major artistic challenge is beyond the scope of this paper.¹¹ I will rather try to support my hypothesis by dwelling on the visual work performed by the images themselves: the relation between Christ and the angels carrying the cross displays the full incorporation of the serpentine form, whereas the hesitantly rotational movement of the elect who have just risen shows 'the first step' of this ongoing process. Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the fresco, the damned are becoming like Minos, whom they come increasingly to resemble. Finally, in the comparison between the figure of Christ and his diabolical counter-figure, we can see how the serpentine matrix animated by the movement of the Savior contrasts with the 'actual' material serpent that prevents any movement of his opposite's body.¹²

In the *Last Judgment*, the serpentine figure, foreshortening, layering of surfaces, and accentuation of surprising effects are the agents of contraction. These devices collapse the spatial and temporal distance upon which the model of visual history codified in the *istoria* is modeled, as it can be seen to operate on the walls and the vault. I am referring to three different, but connected historical models based on some form of the spatial or temporal production of distance: namely, perspective, typology, and prophecy. It is not by chance that an implosion of these models characterizes the *Last Judgment*: at the very moment preceding the end of human history, there is nothing more to prophesy and no place left for figures that announce future accomplishments; historical depth is dramatically reduced to a compressed thickness of space and time wherein everything past is made to partake of the same condition of *praesens*. This condition of imminence corresponds to the very brief delay between the actual present and what is still to come. As previously stated, the formal device that produces this spatial and temporal contraction is the serpentine form.

¹⁰ According to Saint Paul (*Epistle to the Philippians* 3:21): 'The Lord Jesus Christ who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself'.

¹¹ This point is discussed in my forthcoming book.

¹² The figure of Laocoon is implied in this witty play between the serpentine and the serpent.

The *Last Judgment* is the place where the rules that organize historical narration on the wall and the vault fall apart. It is worth stressing that this rupture is a very effective way of showing the gap between human history and the moment of the second coming of Christ, a moment in which time contracts and 'begins to finish', as Giorgio Agamben has put it, referring to Saint Paul's notion of the *escaton*.¹³

This rupture is a catastrophe in the literal sense of *reversal*: historical time is suddenly recomposed from the point of view of its end. In the fresco, at least three figures represent this operation of *reversal*: an old woman on the upper left side and near the center, John the Baptist and Saint Peter. The woman with muscular arms and sagging breasts is taking off her veil [Fig. 3]. She could be a Sybil, as suggested in 1999 by Fabrizio Mancinelli, the chief restorer of the fresco.¹⁴ There is a pronounced resemblance between her and the Sybil of Cuma whose swollen breast signifies, according to Edgar Wind, the milk of wisdom that she will pour forth for humankind [Fig. 4].¹⁵ Transposed into the *Last Judgment*, the Sybil would perforce have to appear as a woman with empty breasts, for the time of prophecy has ended: she has neither milk nor wisdom to deliver. This portrayal of the Sibyl's breasts may seem a surprising way to figure the exhaustion of the oracular mission; but this reading seems plausible if we consider the Renaissance literature on the Sybil's milk and some important representations of Sybils, such as Pinturicchio's vault frescoes in Santa Maria del Popolo, where the link between milk and prophecy is strongly emphasized. The old woman in the *Last Judgment* is defined as a witness by the deictic gestures that enframe her. One of the angels carrying the cross points at her, while another nearby figure indicates the vault.¹⁶ We can identify the old woman as a witness situated in the time of the *Last Judgment*, who is nevertheless invited to consider the past time of human history (as pictured in the ceiling just above her). She unveils her eyes and ears in a gesture that implies that the spectacle she beholds has been suddenly revealed. Her distinctive attitude, situated among these pointing gestures, designates the point of view from which she sees human history recomposed and revealed *in extremis* – at the precise moment of its ending. This prophetess of the past can be compared

¹³ Agamben G., *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (Stanford: 2005), *passim*.

¹⁴ Mancinelli F., *The Last Judgment, Vol. 1: The Restoration* (Rome: 1999) 199.

¹⁵ Wind, "Michelangelo's Prophets and Sibyls" 138.

¹⁶ This same gesture is also performed by another figure whose hesitation can be understood as a remarkable sign of the imminence of the old woman's gaze.



Fig. 3. [COL. PL. 3] Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Last Judgment* (1536–1541), detail. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

with the well known angel of history painted by Paul Klee and so powerfully described by Walter Benjamin: 'His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet'.¹⁷

¹⁷ Benjamin W., "Thesis on the Philosophy of History", in Arendt H. (ed.), *Illuminations* (New York: 1985) 253–264.



Fig. 4. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Cumean Sybil* (1508–1512). Fresco, vault. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

As a complement to the old woman who figures the contraction of the *distantia temporum* between the oracle and its realization, I turn now to consider John the Baptist, the first witness of Jesus' divinity [Fig. 5]. Astonished, he now assists in the accomplishment of his prophecy: Jesus appears in his magnificent glory – giving 'evidence' that he is the Son of God. The first and the last witness are here superposed in one single figure. John's posture is nevertheless quite puzzling: his right arm is held back by an angel. Another angel just behind points toward him, drawing attention to the Baptist but also designating him as 'the one who first pointed to Jesus Christ'. The inhibited gesture of Saint John is another way of representing the end of human history through the foreclosure of typology as a model of historical temporality. John the Baptist's gesture traditionally points to the future manifestation of the Messiah. This is indeed a seminal gesture as far as it opens a gap, a delay, that the coming of Christ will bridge and close. This delay may be characterized as the form Christian history takes – the tense waiting time that anticipates the final coming. In Michelangelo's fresco, one might say, the pointing gesture of the Baptist is made virtually present through its conspicuous absence, or more precisely, his present function of pointing is restrained and made virtual. This astonishing



Fig. 5. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Last Judgment* (1536–1541), detail. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

contraction visualizes the closing up of the *distantia temporum*, that distance which is – as we have seen – a prerequisite for any typological construction. In other words: Michelangelo not only bypasses typology in the *Last Judgment*, but he also explicitly figures its exhaustion through the device of inhibiting of the Baptist's identifying gesture.

A third figure of contraction is shown in the gesture of Saint Peter who hands back the keys to Jesus. The distance closed up by this action is the gap that separates the divine source of power from its delegate. This distance is a prerequisite for any form of political delegation or, perhaps more interestingly, it is a necessary condition for representation, if we take this term in its substitutive meaning.¹⁸ The Pope, in this sense, is the representative of Christ and the Church, the representative of his kingdom. In the frescoes by Perugino on the side wall, the institutional value of the delivery of the keys is strongly stressed: it is the moment when Peter is charged with temporally substituting for Christ, a function then bequeathed to every new Pope [Fig. 6]. The handing over of the keys links the painting on the wall to the *Last Judgment* in an interesting way.



Fig. 6. Pietro Perugino, *Christ's Charge to St. Peter* (1480–1482). Fresco, 335 × 550 cm. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

¹⁸ This substitutive notion of representation is at the very core of Louis Marin's theory of royal power; see Marin L., *Portrait of the King* (Minneapolis: 1988).

The institutional self-enclosed temporality of the Quattrocento *istoria* is opened up and discarded. The montage between the institutional temporality of Perugino's fresco and the eschatological temporality of the *Last Judgment* could be described as the opening of Peter's gesture onto an urgent future. Peter, in fact, seems hesitant to return the keys back, and this hesitation opens up a short delay.

I have briefly introduced three figures of the contraction of time, or more precisely, of the contraction of the distance between times (*distantia temporum*): the Sybil as contraction of oracular temporality, John the Baptist as contraction of the time of witnessing, and Saint Peter as contraction of the duration of the Church's institutional mission. I would like to stress that the dynamic notion of contraction allows us to keep together, in a single meaningful category, the figurative contraction exhibited by these three scenes and the 'figural' contraction of time and space produced by foreshortening and by the serpentine form. In other words, the three scenes play a role of semantic anchorage: they make explicit the sense in which the fresco as a whole constructs space and time. The figurative and the figural level are thereby complementary: they work together in making visible the end of human history and the exhaustion of typology.

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T TYPOLOGY – BACK WITH A VENGEANCE! TEXT, IMAGES, AND MARGINAL GLOSSES IN VORSTERMAN'S 1534 DUTCH BIBLE

Wim François*

1. *The Vorsterman Bible as a Set of Successive Editions*

1.1 *Vorsterman's 1528 Bible as an Eclectic, 'Protestantizing' Version*

In October 1528, Willem Vorsterman published in Antwerp his famous illustrated Bible.¹ The New Testament was already a second edition, the first edition having been published in July of the same year, in cooperation with Jan Seversz. The latter was a printer-publisher from Leiden, who had been banned from the Northern Netherlands because of his dissident religious ideas and had emigrated to Antwerp. Vorsterman's 1528 Bible was devised as an alternative to the Liesvelt Bible, which was published two years earlier, but was viewed with suspicion because of its Reformation-minded characteristics. Vorsterman's 1528 Bible was published with the approval of both Nicolas Coppin, Louvain theologian, vice-chancellor of the University, and book censor, and Nicolas ('Claes') van Lyere, sheriff of Antwerp, and it was granted a patent and privilege on behalf of the Emperor. And although the Bible thus received the status of (semi-)official Dutch version of the Low Countries, its text, biblical canon, and prologue display an outspoken eclectic character [Fig. 1].

* I wish to thank Ms. Jennifer Besselsen-Dunachie for her invaluable assistance in translating this text.

¹ The basic information on Vorsterman's 1528 Bible, is also included in François W., "The Compositors' Neglect or the True Story Behind the Prohibition of Vorsterman's Dutch Bibles", in Lambergits M. – Stanciu D. (eds.), *Condemnations: Authors, Texts, Contexts*, forthcoming. For a general introduction to Vorsterman's 1528 Bible, see also Augustijn C., "De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 56 (1975–76) 78–94; Bruin C.C. de, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers. Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen vanaf de Reformatie tot 1637*, rev. F.G.M. Broeyer (Haarlem – Brussels: 1993) 111–118; Hollander A. den, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen. Dutch Translations of the Bible 1522–1545*, Bibliotheca Bibliographica Neerlandica 33 (Nieuwkoop: 1997) 90–92, 189–193, 226, 350–357. For the edition: *Den Bibel. Tgeheel Oude ende Nieuwe Testament met groeter naersticheyt naden Latijnschen text gecorrigeert, ende opten cant des boecks die alteratie die hebreusche veranderinge, naerder hebreuscher waerheyt der boecken die int hebreus zijn, ende die griecse der boecken die int griecs zijn, ende dinhout voor die capitelen gestelt, Met schoonen figuren ghedruct, ende naerstelijc weder oversien [...] (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1528).*

As regards the Old Testament in Vorsterman's 1528 Bible, it has been established that the text of the Psalms, as well as marginal references to the Hebrew in the margins, was extensively copied from a late medieval Dutch Psalter that is uniquely to be found in a manuscript, preserved in Philadelphia with ms. 739 (olim Dutch 1) as a signature and dating from ca. 1485.² On the basis of a careful comparison of the text of the liturgical canticles in the Philadelphia manuscript and the corresponding texts in the Vorsterman Bible, the hypothesis has been put forward that a similar Middle Dutch version of the Pentateuch and even of all the historical books of the Bible may have existed, which Vorsterman to a great extent copied for both his text and marginal glosses.³ The translation of the Psalms and the alleged History Bible, as well as the marginal glosses, most probably issue from the milieu of Christian humanists in Holland who, in their turn, were rooted in the *Devotio Moderna*, and who displayed an interest in the Hebrew variants of the traditional text of the Bible.⁴ The composers of the Vorsterman Bible (who label themselves as 'correctuers' ['correctors'] in the prologue) most probably also borrowed materials (especially marginal glosses) from Luther's translation of the Pentateuch, which was published in 1523 and was based on the Hebrew (while at the same time using elements from Luther's prologue to his translation).⁵ It is of course obvious that the 'correctors' could also have made use of a copy of Liesvelt's 1526 Bible and even the Old Testament edited by Hans (I) van Ruremund of 1525, as was already assumed in previous research relating to Vorsterman's 1528 Bible.⁶ With regard to the Prophets and the books of Wisdom, the

² Desplenter Y., "Vroegmoderne Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen middeleeuwer dan vermoed. Vondst van een vijftiende-eeuwse getuige van het Vorsterman-psalter (1528)", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 123 (2007) 185–207. See also idem, "Fund eines mittelalterlichen 'Lutherpsalters': Der mittelniederländische Philadelphia-Psalter (ca. 1485) und die frühmodernen niederländischen Bibeldrucke", in François W. – Hollander A. den (eds.), *Wading Lambs and Swimming Elephants: The Bible for the Laity and Theologians in Late Medieval and Early Modern Era*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 257 (Leuven: 2012) 55–88.

³ Desplenter Y., "Een Middelnederlands Oud Testament uit Holland in de Vorsterman-bijbel (1528)? De cantica in het Middelnederlandse Philadelphia-psalter", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 127 (2011) 3–27.

⁴ Desplenter even puts forward the hypothesis that the text in question may have been translated by Cornelius Gheritsz. of Gouda (known as Cornelius Aurelius [ca. 1460–1531]), a canon regular, humanist, and scribe of the monastery of Lopsen near Leiden (Desplenter, "Vroegmoderne Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen" 200–201).

⁵ Desplenter, "Vroegmoderne Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen" 199.

⁶ According to Desplenter, it is probable that Jacob van Liesvelt also borrowed materials from the late medieval History Bible in question, especially by integrating its marginal glosses into the text. Van Ruremund also appealed to this Bible, albeit to a lesser degree.

'correctors' certainly go back to Van Liesvelt's 1526 and Van Ruremund's 1525 version, in which some of the books were translated on the basis of Luther's version, where these were already available, while the majority of books were (still) based upon the Vulgate. To have access to the original 'Hebrew' text of all the Prophets, the 'correctors' most certainly used the 1527 German Prophets' Bible, translated by the spiritualizing Anabaptists Hans Denck and Ludwig Hätzer. It is even possible that Vorsterman used an existing Dutch translation of the said Prophets' Bible, which may have been produced by the Dutch humanist Gerard Geldenhouwer, who had converted to the Reformation.⁷ The translation was reflected in the marginal glosses to (and even in the main text of) Vorsterman's Bible.⁸

The aforementioned vernacular source texts of Vorsterman's Old Testament appealed to a great extent to the original Hebrew text, so that Vorsterman's Bible also goes back *indirectly* to the original Hebrew, and is thus not *directly* based on the *Polyglotta Complutensis* as the 'correctors' insisted in the prologue. In that prologue, the 'correctors' of Vorsterman's Bible alleged that they had appealed to the Polyglot Bible in order to provide a Vulgate-based translation of the Old Testament and, especially, to extract the original Hebrew readings, which they subsequently relegated to the margin, where they were introduced by the abbreviations 'th.', 'the.' or 'theb.' (which stand for 'thebreeuws' or 'Hebrew').⁹ In the first edition of the Vorsterman Bible, this process of 'vulgatizing' the text was, however, not carried out in an absolute way, so that some readings based on the Hebrew had remained within the text.¹⁰

As regards the canon, Vorsterman's 1528 Bible includes all the books of the Old Testament, thus including the so-called apocryphal or deutero-canonical books, which are placed in the same sequence as in the Latin Vulgate. An introductory note to most of the works in question mentions, however, that they do not belong to the Hebrew canon; to a number of

Van Ruremund and even Liesvelt also used Luther's version, but not as exclusively as the traditional research has assumed (Desplenter, "Een Middelnederlands Oud Testament" 8–12). In contrast to Vorsterman and Van Liesvelt, however, Van Ruremund did not use the late medieval Psalter (see Desplenter, "Vroegmoderne Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen" 193–194; "Een Middelnederlands Oud Testament" 11).

⁷ Augustijn, "De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528" 84–85, 90; den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen 190–192*; de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*, rev. Broeyer 190–192.

⁸ Desplenter, "Een Middelnederlands Oud Testament" 14–19.

⁹ *Den Bibel. Tgeheel Oude ende Nieuwe Testament*, fol. *1v–*2v.

¹⁰ *Den Bibel. Tgeheel Oude ende Nieuwe Testament*, fol. *2v–*3r.

them, an explanation is additionally given indicating why the Church had decided to include them in the Bible.

It should be observed, however, that there were few or no complaints uttered regarding assumed 'confessionally suspect' translations in the Old Testament. This was completely different as regards the New Testament. In Vorsterman's 1528 Bible, the text of the New Testament was borrowed from Christoffel van Ruremund's translation of 1526, including its outspoken Reformation-minded passages. Again, the aim had been to correct the text of the New Testament on the basis of the Vulgate, but also in this case, the process had not been carried out in an absolute way. On the contrary, Vorsterman's 1528 New Testament text contains some translations that belonged, as a rule, to the Reformation-minded editions of that period. *Matthew* 3:2 and *Matthew* 4:17, which read in the Vulgate version 'penitentiam agite', are translated as 'Repent!' ('Hebt berou'), instead of 'Do penance!' ('Doet penitencie'). The 'ecclesia' of *Matthew* 16:18, is translated as 'congregation' ('ghemeynte') and not as 'Church', and the 'presbyteroi ecclesiae' from *James* 5:14 as 'the elders of the congregation' ('dye oudtste vander ghemeynten'), instead of 'the priests of the Church'. *1 Corinthians* 15:10 is given in the Vulgate as: 'Non ego sed gratia dei mecum', which Vorsterman's 1528 Bible translated as 'yet not I, but the grace of God which was *to* me', and not '*with* me' (italics ours). On the other hand, in *Romans* 3:28 we read: 'For we account a man to be justified by faith, without the works of the law', omitting Luther's 'alone' as an apposition to 'faith' – a choice that had already been made on the level of Van Ruremund's 1526 edition.

In the margin of the New Testament we also find several marginal glosses, which are above all cross-references to other passages of the Bible, and sporadic references to where the Greek text has a different reading, as well as a single content-related notice. As regards the paratextual material, we also find summaries above the chapters, which are borrowed in the same way from Van Ruremund's 1526 edition, for example, above *Matthew* 16: '[...] How Jesus said that he would build his congregation upon the confession of the faith'.

It should further be observed that Vorsterman's text of the New Testament, consistent with Van Ruremund 1526, was introduced by the so-called *canones*, then generally ascribed to Ammonius of Alexandria (but now accepted as having issued from Eusebius of Caesarea's pen). These *canones* are synoptic tables proposing a division of the Gospels in several sections, indicating where the Gospels correspond with each other and where they diverge. The idea behind the inclusion of the *canones*

was that the Gospel texts should function as each other's most authoritative explanation. In an introductory note or "Onderwijs" ("Instruction") it was even bluntly stated: 'Why should we look for another teacher than Christ alone!'

As regards the canon of Vorsterman's New Testament, it is interesting to note that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not included as the final book of Paul's Epistles, but was placed at the end of the Epistolary literature, after the Third Epistle of John, but before the Epistles of James and Jude, and the Apocalypse. In line with Luther's editions, which were imitated in this regard by Van Ruremund 1526, these four books constituted a sort of deuterocanonical appendix at the end of the New Testament.

From the point of view of 'visual exegesis' we should also pay attention to the hands with pointing index finger, printed here and there in the margin of Vorsterman's 1528 Bible (both in the Old and the New Testament).¹¹ These hands obviously point to passages with a certain (theological) interest, often texts that are important to the Reformational ideas. We refer to only a number of examples: *Isaiah* 45:23: 'I have sworn by myself, the word of justice shall go out of my mouth, and shall not return, but it shall execute all that I wanted'; *Luke* 21:33: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away'; *Acts* 13:38–39: 'Every one that believeth in him, is justified'; *Romans* 4:6: 'As David also declared that the blessedness is to the man, to whom God reputeth justice without works'; *Ephesians* 2:8–9: 'For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; Not of works, that no man may glory'. The system of hands with pointing index finger was a medieval system that was now used in order to draw the attention of the reader to passages that demonstrably sustained Reformation-minded ideas.

In the elaborate prologue – which was undoubtedly written after the completion of the Bible – the 'correctors' of Vorsterman's Bible indicated great embarrassment since several corrections according to the Vulgate had not been implemented, which, particularly in the New Testament, had resulted in readings that could be liable to harsh criticism from the side of the authorities.¹² In the prologue, as well as in a note included after the Song of Songs (a so-called "na-correctie" or "later correction"), the 'correctors' blame the neglect on the employees in the printing office (who obviously cherished Reformational opinions and were possibly also

¹¹ Cf. Desplenter, "Een Middelnederlands Oud Testament" 22.

¹² *Den Bibel. Tgeheel Oude ende Nieuwe Testament*, fol. *2v–*3r.

responsible for including the hands). Also as regards the debatable choices concerning the canon, the 'correctors' go to great lengths to offer all sorts of ingenious excuses. At the same time, however, they had no qualms about borrowing large parts from the prologue to Luther's German edition to the Pentateuch, which they included in their own prologue, although they nuanced those passages that could be labeled as too outspokenly Reformation-minded.¹³

The employees, who may have deliberately overlooked the corrections suggested by the composers of Vorsterman's 1528 Bible, have been identified with Jan Seversz. – the printer-publisher from Leiden who found refuge in Antwerp – and other religious dissident workmen in Vorsterman's printing office.¹⁴ Cornelis Augustijn even expressed serious doubts about the sincerity of the embarrassment of the 'correctors' displayed in the Bible's prologue and the "na-correctie" included after the Song of Songs, and suggested that they themselves belonged to 'biblical-humanist circles influenced by Luther'.¹⁵ According to Paul Arblaster, however, it should not be ruled out that the 'correctors' did belong to Catholic biblical-humanist circles, and that they should be located more specifically in Franciscan milieus. In this respect, Arblaster points to the fact that Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, whose *Polyglotta Complutensis* the 'correctors' called their basic source and whose coat of arms figures on the Bible's title page, was a Franciscan. A possible allusion to Mary's Immaculate Conception in the prologue, also points to a Franciscan origin, since the members of the Order belonged to the main promoters of the doctrine in question.¹⁶ But more importantly, Arblaster recognizes in the prologue traces of a 'traditionalist scriptural piety' in the spirit of the Louvain Franciscan biblical scholar Francis Titelmans.¹⁷ To Arblaster's argumentation can even be added that, during the very same period, the work of Titelmans was published by Antwerp printers, amongst whom Vorsterman himself.¹⁸

¹³ *Den Bibel. Tgeheel Oude ende Nieuwe Testament*, fol. *3r–*4v. See in this regard Augustijn, "De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528" 90–93.

¹⁴ Augustijn, "De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528" 88–89.

¹⁵ Augustijn, "De Vorstermanbijbel van 1528" 94.

¹⁶ '[...] die alder puerste ende suyverste maghet Mariam' (*Den Bibel. Tgeheel Oude ende Nieuwe Testament*, fol. *3r).

¹⁷ Arblaster P., "'Totius Mundi Emporium': Antwerp as a Centre for Vernacular Bible Translations 1523–1545", in Gelderblom A.-J. – Jong J.L. den – Vaeck M. van (eds.), *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs*, Intersections 3 (Leiden – Boston: 2004) 9–31, esp. 24–25.

¹⁸ Vorsterman himself published in 1528 the *Tractatus de expositione mysteriorum missæ* and in 1529 the *Collationes quinque super epistolam ad Romanos beati Pauli apostoli*.

1.2 *Vorsterman's Catholic Bibles (1529–31)*¹⁹

Whether the embarrassment of the ‘correctors’ was sincere or not, very soon after the publication of Vorsterman’s Bible, steps were clearly taken with a view to the correction of the text. In September 1529, a separate folio edition of the New Testament was published, which was obviously meant to replace the edition of 1528 and be bound together with the 1528 Old Testament.²⁰ Vorsterman had the text of this New Testament changed in a way that the Catholic authorities may have expected of him, namely by dropping Van Ruremund’s 1526 translation and by replacing it with the version Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten had published in 1527, the latter providing a ‘vulgarized’ version of Cornelis Hendricz Lettersnijder’s Erasmus translation (1524). Vorsterman’s 1529 New Testament thus had, as a rule, the Vulgate version in the main text, with the variant readings from the Greek relegated to the margin. As a consequence, in *Matthew* 3:2 and *Matthew* 4:17 we actually find ‘Do penance!’ The ‘ecclesia’ of *Matthew* 16:18 is translated as ‘Church’. First *Corinthians* 15:10 reads acceptably as ‘yet not I, but the grace of God which was *with me*’. And the ‘presbyteroi ecclesiae’ from *James* 5:14 is actually translated as ‘the priests of the Church’. Moreover, the hazardous summaries were removed from above the chapters so that we find, for example, above *Matthew* 16: ‘About the Pharisees’ teaching as well as Saint Peter’s confession and how Jesus punished him’. The book of Hebrews for its part was placed back in the correct Catholic, canonical order, at the end of the *corpus Paulinum*. In the introductory material to the New Testament, we still find the *canones*, but the introductory note, including the contested sentence ‘Why should we look for another teacher than Christ alone!’, had been removed.

About a month after the publication of Vorsterman’s 1529 New Testament, the imperial authorities in the Low Countries published a major anti-heresy edict, implementing increasingly severe measures aimed at eliminating all kind of heterodox publications in general, and forbidden Bibles in particular.²¹ Obviously as a consequence of these measures,

¹⁹ For the basic information on Vorsterman’s Catholic Bibles, see also François, “The Compositors’ Neglect”.

²⁰ Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* 226–227, 358–360.

²¹ On Bible publications and censorship, see François W., “Die volkssprachliche Bibel in den Niederlanden des 16. Jahrhunderts: Zwischen Antwerpener Buchdruckern und Löwener Buchzensoren”, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 120 (2009) 187–214, esp. 199–205; idem, “Vernacular Bible Reading and Censorship in Early Sixteenth Century: The Position

Vorsterman had requested a new inspection of his Bible publications by the Louvain theologians, who, as a result, had suggested a few corrections, which Vorsterman in his turn integrated in his publications. This at least emerges from a so-called “Mandement verleen by den Keyser” (“Ordinance given by the Emperor”) dated 24 May 1530 (but only included in Vorsterman’s Bible of 1534). Later in the year 1530, Vorsterman indeed issued two independent editions of the New Testament, the first on 28 August (in sextodecimo format),²² the other on 7 November (in an octavo format).²³ These subsequent publications offered a further Vulgate-based revision of the text included in the 1529 edition, while paratextual elements, such as marginal references to the Greek, as well as summaries above the chapters, were removed. Both 1530 editions also included the Epistle readings from mass that were taken from the Old Testament. Important, however, is that Vorsterman had these editions preceded by a new preface, entitled “Den kersten leser saluyt” (“Greetings to the Christian reader”) and containing thoroughly Catholic emphases concerning Bible reading in the vernacular. In this regard, it is argued that the text of the Scriptures is, in passages, very obscure. It was therefore highly recommendable that people not interpret the Scriptures all by themselves, since they ran the risk of falling into errors and heresies. People should be prepared to allow themselves to be instructed by priests and preachers, who, completely in line with Catholic teaching, were to be considered as the necessary mediators between God’s Word and his flock. The anonymous author of the preface also lashes out against those editions of the Bible that do not contain the text of the Vulgate, which was ascribed without question to Jerome, and those provided with misleading paratextual elements, such as glosses and prologues.

Vorsterman obviously also submitted his Old Testament version to revision, so that in 1531, the printer-publisher was able to issue a second edition of his complete Bible.²⁴ From the Old Testament, almost

of the Louvain Theologians”, in Hollander A. de – Lamberigts M. (eds.), *Lay Bibles in Europe 1450–1800*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 198 (Leuven: 2006) 69–96, esp. 79–89; idem, “Die ‘Ketzerplakate’ Kaiser Karls in den Niederlanden und ihre Bedeutung für Bibelübersetzungen in den Volkssprache: Der ‘Proto-Index’ von 1529 als vorläufiger Endpunkt”, *Dutch Review of Church History* 84 (2004) 198–247; Hollander A. den, *Verboden bijbels. Bijbelcensuur in de Nederlanden in de eerste helft van de zestiende eeuw*, Oratiereeks (Amsterdam: 2003), esp. 9–11.

²² Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* 93, 228, 369–371; de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*, rev. Broeyer 114.

²³ Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* 93, 228, 372–374.

²⁴ Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* 93–94, 228, 382–386.

the entire prologue of 1528 was omitted, retaining only the praise for the knowledge of the biblical languages, as well as an explanation necessary for understanding the system employed, according to which variants from the Hebrew (and the Greek) were put in the margin of the text. Additionally, the affirmation was retained that the Bible edition at hand, and the interest in the original text, were in line with the *Polyglotta Complutensis*, suggesting that it possessed the blessing – so to speak – of Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros. The text and the marginal glosses of Vorsterman's Old Testament display consistently the same eclectic character as was the case in 1528, but it must be re-emphasized that the Old Testament was seldom or not at all at stake in the controversies that raged at the time regarding the text of the Bible, but that, far more frequently, the debate focused on the aforementioned delicate passages of the New Testament. In this regard, Vorsterman's 1531 edition continued to give the text as it had already been conceived in 1530, namely, a Vulgate text stripped of all paratextual elements such as marginal glosses and summaries above the chapters, but preceded by the 'good-Catholic' preface "Greetings to the Christian reader". The hands with the pointing index finger had also been removed.

1.3 Vorsterman's 'Experimental' Glossed Bibles from the 1530s and 1540s

Vorsterman brought further editions of the complete Bible onto the market in 1532, 1533–1534 and 1542.²⁵ The said editions display some differences to one another, and the expansion once again in volume of the paratextual material is striking. From 1532 onwards, the thoroughly Catholic preface entitled "Greetings to the Christian reader", which had preceded both New Testament editions of 1530 and was also included in the Bible of 1531, disappeared. Instead, we see the reintroduction of the *canones*, as well as the introductory note to them, even including the contested sentence 'Why should we look for another teacher than Christ alone!'²⁶ [Fig. 2].

The most interesting changes are, however, to be found in Vorsterman's 1533–1534 Bible.²⁷ In the preliminary pages of the edition under consideration we find a "Tafel op die gheheele Heylighe Schriftuere" ("Table on the entire Holy Scripture"), which contains an elaborate list, alphabetically

²⁵ For the basic information on Vorsterman's glossed Bibles, see also François, "The Compositors' Neglect".

²⁶ Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* 94, 228, 397–401.

²⁷ Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* 94, 228, 424–427.



Fig. 2. Title-page to Vorsterman's 1532 Bible (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1532).
 KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1532.

ordered, of diverse topics from Scripture, followed by their location in the Bible. Some of these topics breathe an outspoken Reformation-minded spirit. On the other hand, the sentence 'Why should we look for another teacher than Christ alone!' was removed from the introductory note to the New Testament *canones*. The considerable number of marginal glosses that were added to both text and images are extremely fascinating. These include chronological or 'historicizing' annotations: some of them connect the events described in the Bible with the history of humanity since creation, with the empires and kingdoms of Antiquity, or with Jesus' birth and the other crucial episodes of salvation history. Vorsterman also added some short summaries and simple explanatory notes in the margin of his 1533–1534 Bible, in some cases next to the text, in other cases accompanying certain illustrations. Most interesting are the typological explications, which, in line with a medieval tradition, point to Old Testament motifs as a prefiguration of the mysteries of the faith, and of the salutary events in the life of Christ, as well as of his mother Mary. Such annotations juxtaposed with illustrative material constitute the kind of visual exegesis that will be dealt with in the third part of this essay. The said glosses share the margins of this Bible with manifold references to the Hebrew text, cross-references to other biblical passages, and hands with the pointing index finger (the latter remaining mainly in the Old Testament, while most of such references had been removed from the New Testament). These paratextual elements were already present in and from the time of the original composition of the Vorsterman Bible. As a result, Vorsterman's 1533–1534 edition is a distinctly glossed Bible, as are the editions based directly on it, namely the Bible published by Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch in 1541, and another edition of Vorsterman's Bible in 1542, with reprints in 1543, 1544 en 1545 [Fig. 3].

In short, with the designation 'Vorsterman Bible', a cluster of editions is to be understood, ranging from the 1528 eclectic, 'Protestantizing' version, and including the orthodox Catholic Bibles of 1529–1531, to the 'experimental' – but largely Catholic – glossed Bibles from the 1530s and 1540s.²⁸ It must be added that within a Northern Dutch Protestant history writing tradition, attention has been pre-dominantly given to the 1528 'Protestantizing' version, so that the impression was created that the

²⁸ For extensive information on the corpus of Vorsterman Bibles, see François W., "De Vorstermanbijbel", in Gillaerts P. et alii (eds.), *Bijbelvertalingen in de Lage Landen: Een geschiedenis* (Heerenveen: 2014), forthcoming.

For the editions, see also www.bibliasacra.com.



Fig. 3. Title-page to Vorsterman's 1533-34 Bible (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F°/Bijb 1533-34.

same features were also present in the subsequent editions. This is, however, a misconception: Vorsterman's 1528 Bible was to a large degree only a 'first attempt', while the numerous subsequent editions, which offer a text more adapted to the Vulgate, were much more representative of the Bible production of the Antwerp printer.

2. *The Illustration Program of Vorsterman's Bibles*

Before bestowing more extensive attention on the marginal glosses that accompany the pictures in Vorsterman's 1533–34 edition, we will first sketch the evolution of the illustration program of Vorsterman's Bibles. In this regard, we appeal extensively to the foundational and still highly valuable study by Bart Rosier.²⁹ As regards Vorsterman's 1528 Bible, the large majority of illustrations in the Old Testament, namely, all narrative illustrations, were made by the skillful painter-woodcutter Jan Swart of Groningen. The illustrations accompanying the description of the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle of the Desert and Solomon's Temple, and which ultimately go back to the pictorial tradition of the *Postilla* by Nicholas of Lyra (ca. 1270–1349), are of a different hand. The representations of the Ark of the Covenant and Tabernacle (*Exodus* 25ff.) are 'very accurate copies of woodcuts in Hans Lufft's octavo edition of the first part of Luther's Old Testament' (Wittenberg 1523). To illustrate the Temple (1 *Kings* 6–7), Vorsterman 'had copies cut after the woodcuts used in the Liesvelt Bible', which in turn were based upon the illustrations included in the second part of Luther's Old Testament, edited by Christian Döring and Lucas Cranach the Elder (Wittenberg 1524).³⁰ Further in this essay, we will enter into more detail as regards the illustrations of the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem, which stem from the *Postilla*-tradition.

In Vorsterman's 1528 New Testament, we find 'portraits of the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and John' that are 'printed from blocks that Vorsterman used together with Martin Lempereur' alias Merten de Keyser (the latter since 1530) and that are 'copies after the woodcuts in Hiero Fuchs' New Testament of 1525', which in turn were copies after Hans Holbein

²⁹ Rosier B.A., *The Bible in Print: Netherlandish Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. C.F. Weterings, 2 vols. (Leiden: 1997).

³⁰ Cf. Rosier, *The Bible in Print* vol. I 16–17.

the Younger, first published in Luther's New Testament by Adam Petri (Basel 1523). 'The woodcut of the evangelist Luke does not belong to this series', and was probably in the possession of Jan Seversz., who had formerly used it in other publications. The same is true of some woodcuts that are attributed to the Leiden painter and printmaker Lucas van Leyden, namely, the 'Baptism of Christ', the 'Resurrection', and the 'Birth of Christ'; the last two prints have been demonstrably used by Jan Seversz. in earlier works. This is additional evidence of the extensive involvement of the Leiden printer in Vorsterman's 1528 New Testament project. Rosier states that 'the most striking thing in the illustration material of Vorsterman's New Testament is probably the series of about forty small woodcuts depicting events from the life of Christ and parables'. Rosier surmises that 'Vorsterman did not have these woodcuts especially crafted for his Bible, but used already existing blocks instead'. Finally, the 1528 New Testament contains five illustrations of the Revelation of John, made by Jan Swart (who was also responsible for most of the narrative illustrations to the Old Testament).³¹

Vorsterman's reworked, that is, 'vulgarized' New Testament edition of 1529 was far less richly illustrated than the 1528 edition. Interesting is that the three woodcuts attributed to Lucas van Leyden, which had probably belonged to Jan Seversz., had been removed. This may be a supplementary indication that it was indeed Jan Seversz. who was extensively involved in Vorsterman's 'Protestantizing' 1528 edition, but that the Leiden printer had no longer contributed to the 1529 edition. The portrait of Luke, which was also in the possession of Seversz., was equally removed, but this was also the case with the portrait of Mark and John, so that only the image of Matthew (a copy after Holbein) was retained. It must moreover be added that the forty small illustrations to the Gospels were also not to be found in the 1529 New Testament (but these images would be included once again in later editions of Vorsterman's, beginning with that of 1532). The five illustrations of the Revelation of John, made by Jan Swart, were retained in the 1529 edition.³²

'In the sextodecimo edition of the New Testament that Vorsterman published on 28 August 1530, he used several old blocks that were formerly used by Jan van Ghelen' for his New Testament editions, namely, the portraits of the evangelists and two of the three woodcuts of Paul (editions of

³¹ Freely quoted after *ibidem* I 17–19.

³² *Ibidem* I 19.

1526 and 1528), as well as the twenty-one illustrations to the Apocalypse (1528 edition). The latter were copies after Hans Holbein's illustrations – first included in Luther's New Testament published by Hans Wolff in Basel in 1523 – made for Van Ghelen's 1528 New Testament and cut after those published in Christoffel van Ruremund's 1526 New Testament. 'The portraits of Peter, John, James and the third print of Paul do not originate with Van Ghelen'.³³ As regards the images of Vorsterman's octavo edition of the New Testament dated 7 November 1530, we refer to Rosier who states that it 'contains for the most part the same woodcuts as the August edition'. A new image is, however, added, naemly, the 'Descent of the Holy Spirit', which is the only picture retained here from the series that mainly contains portraits of evangelists and apostles and that was based on Holbein and taken over from Fuchs 1525, and that appeared in Vorsterman's and Lempereur's Bibles. The Holbeinesque Apocalypse illustrations in the New Testament of November 1530 were not printed from the woodblocks Van Ghelen had used in 1528, but from those that Vorsterman had earlier used for his French New Testament of 1529 and that were also copies after the prints in Christoffel van Ruremund's 1526 New Testament. In the Bible editions of 1532 and later, the said Apocalypse woodblocks were once again used.³⁴ It is interesting to observe that in the latter woodblocks, 'the angel on the castle-like building on the fourteenth ('The adoration of the Lamb on Mount Sion and the fall of Babylon') and eighteenth ('The fall of Babylon') print has been omitted'. In the 1530 August edition, this was already the case with the fourteenth print, whereas the eighteenth still retained the angel. Rosier rightly observes that Vorsterman had carried out an additional censure, in order to avoid every identification of the represented castle with the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. For this was what the Reformers had aspired to, namely, identifying the apocalyptic Babylon from the Revelation of John with the Rome of the Pope of their time, who was considered to be the Antichrist.³⁵

As regards the Bible of 1531, the Old Testament, which invariably gives 27 October 1528 as a publication date, contains the same woodcuts as the first edition.³⁶ The 1531 New Testament was more extensively illustrated than the 1529 edition, but still not to the extent of the 1528 Bible, which included the aforementioned extensive series of woodcuts to the Gospels.

³³ Cf. *ibidem* I 20–21.

³⁴ Cf. *ibidem* I 21.

³⁵ *Ibidem* I 55.

³⁶ *Ibidem* I 19.

The 1531 edition contains the images of the evangelists Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the 'Descent of the Holy Spirit' (beginning of Acts), and, for the first time, the apostle Paul after Hans Holbein. The portrait of Matthew 'does not belong to this series and is almost identical to the woodcut in the Gospel according to Matthew of 1522' by the Amsterdam printer Doen Pietersoen. 'In addition, two fifteenth-century woodcuts appear', namely, the 'Journey to Emmaus' and 'James the Great Preaching'.³⁷ Illustrations to the Apocalypse are completely absent.

In order to illustrate the Old Testament included in his Bible editions from 1532 onward (thus also in the 1533–1534 and 1542 editions and the reprints of the latter), Vorsterman opted for a new collection of woodcuts, namely, those Martin Lempereur had originally used for his French Bible of 1530, which had the same (semi-)official status in the Low Countries as Vorsterman's Dutch Bible.³⁸ Lempereur's woodcuts are in part faithful copies and in part free-style imitations of the pictures that had been included, from 1512 onward, in the *Biblia cum concordantiis veteris et novi testamenti*, a Vulgate edition printed and published by Jacob Sacon in Lyons (though financed by Anton Koberger of Nuremberg).³⁹ Many of these illustrations were in their turn copied in a more or less free style after the woodcuts in the 1511 Vulgate edition of the Venetian printer-editor LucAntonio di Giunta (who had previously commissioned them to be made for his Italian Malermi translation, 1490).⁴⁰ The vast majority of the images in the Giunta Bible were original work, attributed to an important Venetian illuminator known as the 'Maestro di Pico' or the 'Pico Master';⁴¹

³⁷ Freely quoted after ibidem I 21–22.

³⁸ The presentation of the illustration program concerned has also been included in François W., "Solomon Writing and Resting: Tradition, Words and Images in the 1548 Dutch 'Louvain Bible'", in Brusati C. – Enenkel K.A.E. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *The Authority of the Word: Reflecting on Image and Text in Northern Europe, 1400–1700*, Intersections 20 (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 181–213, esp. 189–190. See also Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 22–23, 189–196.

³⁹ Baudrier J., *Bibliographie Lyonnaise. Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVI^e siècle*, 13 vols. (Lyons – Paris: 1895–1950) XII 330–60. Cf. Delaveau M. – Hillard D. (eds.), *Bibles imprimées du XV^e au XVIII^e siècle conservées à Paris* (Paris: 2002) 135–140. Besides appearing in Sacon's Lyonnese Bibles, copies after the illustrations under discussion were printed in several of Koberger's Nuremberg Latin Bibles as well as in Friedrich Peypus' Latin Bible of 1524, also printed in Nuremberg.

⁴⁰ Camerini P., *Annali dei Giunti, vol. I. Venezia*, Biblioteca bibliographica Italica 26 (Florence: 1962) 147–149.

⁴¹ Armstrong L., "Il Maestro di Pico: Un miniature Veneziano del tardo quattrocento", *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 17 (1990) 7–39, esp. 27–30, 37; Bentivoglio Ravasio R., "Maestro del Plinio di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Maestro di Pico)", in Bollati M. (ed.), *Dizionario biografico dei miniatori italiani: Secoli IX–XVI* (Milan: 2004) 635–642.

a quarter of the pictures were inspired by Heinrich Quentel's Cologne Bible of 1478–1479. From 1518, however, Sacon began to replace the copies after Giunta's woodcuts, which had in the meantime become old-fashioned, with new prints. These were the work of the Nuremberg artists, Erhard Schön and Hans Springinklee (who, to a certain degree, were still tributaries to the aforementioned pictorial tradition of the Cologne Bible). Lempereur's designer had the woodcuts copied and adapted from Sacon's 1521 or 1522 edition.⁴² Rosier asserts that the designer 'maintained the compositional schemes and meaningful visual elements of Sacon's prints, but worked within his own style and according to his own vision, thereby ultimately creating a very personal interpretation'.⁴³

As almost all sixteenth-century illustrated Bible editions from the Low Countries, Lempereur's edition also contains images of the Ark of the Covenant and its accessories (*Exodus* 25), the Tabernacle of the Desert and its different parts (*Exodus* 26), the vestments of the High Priest (*Exodus* 28:1–4), in addition to the ground plan of the camp of the Israelites (described in *Numbers* 2:1–33/4, but placed next to *Numbers* 3), and even the vision of Ezekiel (*Ezekiel* 1:4–19), amongst other pictures (but without illustrations to the Temple, 1 *Kings* 6–7). These images aim at illustrating the often complex 'technical' descriptions of liturgical objects, edifices or places found in the Old Testament. These descriptions were liable to divergent interpretations by Jewish scholars (especially Rabbi Shlomo Itzhaki, alias Rashi [1040–1105]) and by the Doctors of the Church, and both traditions were elaborately discussed in the *Postilla* of Nicholas of Lyra, which were, by the way, supplemented with the *Additiones*, written by Paul of Burgos (ca. 1351–1435). Diagrams made by Nicholas of Lyra (some of them later formalized by Paul of Burgos), with the intentional purpose of illustrating the contrasting technical descriptions,⁴⁴ 'form what

⁴² On this visual tradition after the Sacon-Bible and Schön (and Springinklee), see also Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 19–20 and 84–85; cf. *Ibidem* II 39. Also: Strachan J., *Early Bible Illustrations: A Short Study Based on Some Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century Printed Texts* (Cambridge: 1957) 25–35, and fig. 28; Poortman W.C., *Boekzaal van de Nederlandse Bijbels. Bijbel en Prent*, 2 vols. (The Hague: 1983) I 48–49, 93, 126.

⁴³ Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 19.

⁴⁴ For a more detailed treatment of the *Postilla*-tradition, see Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 69–70; Strachan, *Early Bible Illustrations* 16–24; Kaczynski B.M., "Illustrations of Tabernacle and Temple Implements in the *Postilla in Testamentum Vetus* of Nicolaus de Lyra", *The Yale University Library Gazette* 48/1 (1973) 1–11; also: Rosenau H., "The Architecture of Nicolaus de Lyra's Temple Illustrations and the Jewish Tradition", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25 (1974) 294–304; Cahn W., "Notes on the Illustrations of Ezekiel's Temple Vision in the *Postilla Litteralis* of Nicholas of Lyra", in Kogman-Appel K. – Meyer M. (eds.), *Between Judaism and*

one might term a visual analogue to the written exegesis'.⁴⁵ These drawings, which are preserved in several manuscripts of the *Postilla*, served as a source of inspiration to the some forty woodcuts that were included for the first time in the printed edition that was published in 1481 by Anton Koberger at Nuremberg.⁴⁶ The drawings were copied and miscopied – as was the case with the vision of Ezekiel – and were also included in the editions of Lempereur and Vorsterman (which, presumably, are related to those published in Vorsterman 1528).

As regards the images included in Vorsterman's 1532 New Testament and its later editions, we first see that the portraits of the evangelists Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the portrait of Paul – the abovementioned Holbein copies – are printed from blocks that Vorsterman had used from 1528 and Martin Lempereur from 1530 onwards. The image depicting the 'Descent of the Holy Ghost', for the first time included in Vorsterman's New Testament in the second edition of 1530, also stems from the same series.⁴⁷ The image of Matthew does not belong to this series and is almost identical to the woodcut in the Gospel according to Matthew of 1522 by Doen Pietersoen. It had already been used in Vorsterman's 1531 Bible. As regards the illustrations to the Gospel narratives, Vorsterman included once again the some forty small woodcuts that he had initially used in his edition of 1528 (but had since omitted), depicting events from the life and parables of Jesus. The twenty-one illustrations to the Apocalypse after Hans Holbein are copies after the prints in Christoffel van Ruremund's New Testament of 1526, and were first used by Vorsterman in his 1529 French New Testament.

In conclusion: Willem Vorsterman who, as the holder, since 1528, of the privileged license to publish the (semi-)official Dutch Bible in the Low Countries, adapted text and paratext of his initial 'Protestantizing version' to the requirements of a Catholic edition and eventually also opted for an illustration program that was characteristic for the widely circulated Latin Vulgate editions of Sacon and Giunta. He shared this illustration program

Christianity: Art Historical Essays in Honor of Elisheva (Elisabeth) Revel-Neher, The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1500 81 (Leiden – Boston: 2009) 155–170.

⁴⁵ Kaczynski, "Illustrations of Tabernacle and Temple Implements in the *Postilla*" 1, cf. 5: 'the drawings [...] seem to constitute a sort of visual exegesis'.

⁴⁶ See Schramm A., *Der Bilderschmuck der Frühdrucke*, 23 parts in 8 vols. (Leipzig: 1920–43; repr. Stuttgart: 1981–1990) XVII tables 1–17.

⁴⁷ On Holbein's evangelists and apostles, and the copies made after them, see Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 59–64, and II 42.

(and the concomitant woodblocks) with Martin Lempereur, who, since 1530, was in charge of the edition of the (semi-)official French Bible and, in this regard, was his closest colleague. The same illustration program was later to be found in the 1548 Dutch Louvain Bible.⁴⁸ The impact of this choice of illustration program should not, however, be overestimated: nearly all illustrations concerned are merely visualizations – skillfully made, it is true – of the literal meaning of the text and as such an important help to the reader in comprehending the heart of the biblical story. The large majority of these illustrations have no confessional color and could be used indiscriminately in Protestant or Catholic Bibles, with the notorious exception of some of Hans Holbein's Apocalypse illustrations, where the whore of Babylon is depicted wearing a papal tiara, and the city falling in ruins resembles Rome and its Castel Sant'Angelo, features that printers such as Vosterman scrupulously cut away. As a preparation to the third part of this contribution, another characteristic of the (Old Testament) illustrations included in sixteenth-century Bibles should be recalled to mind: while most of these illustrations may indeed be visualizations of the literal meaning of a story, an important part of them bear pictorial features that go back ultimately to the late Middle Ages, making them open to a typological interpretation. It is uncertain whether the users of sixteenth-century Bibles were, without receiving any guidance, able to see all the Old Testament scenes under discussion as a prefiguration of the salutary events of the life of Christ and his mother and of the mysteries of the Church. Whatever the case may be, in the Vorsterman Bible of 1533–1534, and in the editions published in its wake, glosses and annotations included in the margin make the typological relationships of many images explicit (in addition to providing other kinds of information).

3. *Typology – Back with a Vengeance!*

Taking a closer look at the newly added glosses and annotations, we are able to distinguish a few different categories. The first category contains what we may call 'historicizing' glosses: some of them connect the events described in the Bible with the history of humanity since creation and also usually link the biblical events with Jesus' birth or with the other cru-

⁴⁸ Cf. François, "Tradition, Words and Images in the 1548 Dutch 'Louvain Bible'" 191–192.

cial episodes of salvation history.⁴⁹ Through the inclusion of such glosses, Vorsterman tunes in to a renewed interest among biblical humanists who critically questioned the chronological schemes as they were generally accepted in Western Christianity (in particular since the Venerable Bede)⁵⁰ and sought for other historical sources that were expected to shed a new and clearer light on the chronology of the Bible in its relation to the history of humankind. In this regard, a growing credit was given to the chronology of the Septuagint, which started its calculations from 5199 BCE, the presumed moment of creation, onwards, and which was transmitted in the Christian tradition by chronographers such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome.⁵¹ Vorsterman had more specifically copied several chronological annotations from Jacob van Liesvelt's 1532 Bible. This was the case with the key moments of biblical chronology, such as the flood (in Vorsterman's Bible situated in the year 2279 of the world; 2820 BCE),⁵² the year of Abraham's birth (year 3188 of the world; 2000 BCE),⁵³ the consecration of Solomon's temple (year 4179 of the world; 1020 BCE), amongst other such moments.⁵⁴ Some of these annotations also situate the biblical history in relation to the empires and kingdoms of this world. In line with most chronographers, the beginning of Hebrew history, the

⁴⁹ See, amongst others, Finegan J., *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, revised edition (Peabody MA: 1998) 160–192; also Hughes J., *Secrets of the Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament – Supplement Series 66 (Sheffield: 1990) 259–261, 267–268. See there for further literature.

⁵⁰ Hughes, *Secrets of the Times* 260.

⁵¹ Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* 160–192, a.o. 169 (appeal to the Septuagint).

⁵² In a final gloss at the end of *Genesis* 6 (and just above *Genesis* 7), we read 'Die werelt hadde gestaen twee duysent. twee hondert. lxxix. iaer Ende was voor Christus gheboorte twee duysent/ acht hondert/ ende twintich iaer'. Copied from a marginal gloss in Liesvelt's 1532 Bible, placed between *Genesis* 6 and *Genesis* 7. Rolevinck's *Fasciculus temporum* situates the flood 2379 years after the foundation of the world (AM or Anno Mundi) and 2820 years BCE; Gassar's *Historiarum et chronicorum mundi epitome*: 2240 (2242) AM and 2959 BCE. According to Jerome's Latin version of the Chronicle of Eusebius, the flood is situated in 2242 AM and 2957 BCE.

⁵³ In a final gloss at the end of *Genesis* 11 (and just above *Genesis* 12), we read 'Abram wert gheboren voor Christus gheboorte twee. duysent iaren/ als die werelt ghestaen hadde drie duysent hondert ende lxxxviii. iaren'. Copied from a marginal gloss in Liesvelt's 1532 Bible, placed at the end of *Genesis* 11. *Fasciculus*: 3113 years AM, 2085 BCE; *Historiarum et chronicorum mundi epitome*: 3184 AM, 2015 BCE. According to Jerome's version of the Chronicle of Eusebius, Abraham's birth was indeed situated in 3184 AM and 2015 BCE.

⁵⁴ In a marginal gloss to 1 *Kings* 8, we read 'Die werelt hadde ghestaen vier duysent hondert ende lxxix. iaer voor Christus geboorte duysent ende. xx. iaer'. The same marginal gloss is to be found in Liesvelt's 1532 Bible. Foundation of the Temple according to *Fasciculus temporum*: 4165 AM and 1034 BCE; *Historiarum et chronicorum mundi epitome*: 4173 AM [1026 BCE?]. According to Jerome's version of the Chronicle of Eusebius, the foundation of the temple took place 4168 AM and 1033 BCE.

calling of Abraham, was related to 'Ninus, the first King of Assyria'. Of this mythical figure, it was said in the margin of *Genesis* 12:14–20 that he was 'the first King who himself ventured beyond his own country and fought against other nations. He subjected the whole of Asia to his authority, and he also founded the great town of Nineveh. The town was 40 miles in width, and had 1500 towers'.⁵⁵ Other glosses in Vorsterman's Bible were not copied from Liesvelt's, but were obviously borrowed from the same kind of sources that his colleague and most formidable competitor had used [Fig. 4].⁵⁶

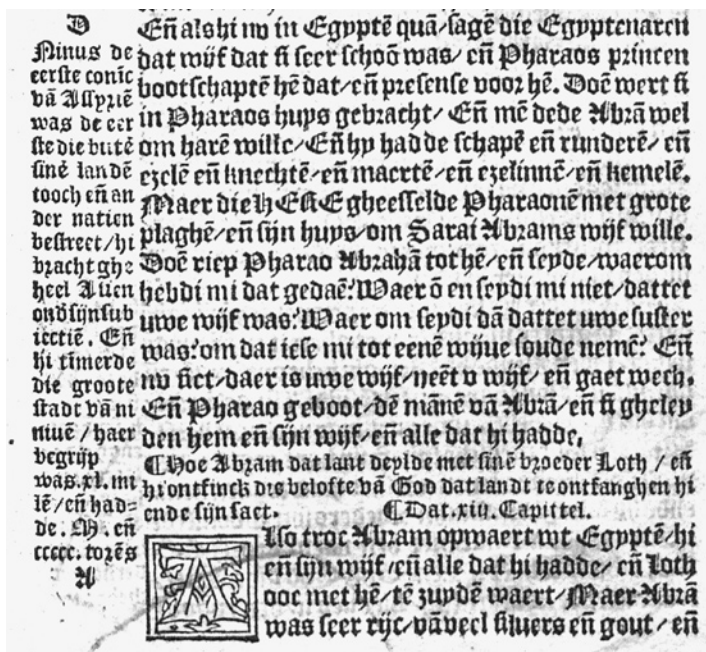


Fig. 4. Gloss to *Genesis* 12:14–20 (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534).
KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F°/Bijb 1533–34.

⁵⁵ 'Ninus de eerste coninc van Assyrien was de eerste die buten sinen landen tooch ende ander natien bestreet/ hi bracht gheheel Asien onder sijn subiectien. Ende hi timmerde die groote stadt van nineven/ haer begrijp was 40 milen/ ende hadden 1500 torens'. This gloss is a combination of two marginal glosses to be found in Liesvelt's 1532 Bible. On Ninus, see also Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* 170.

⁵⁶ Vorsterman had in fact advertised these chronological and historicizing glosses on the title page of his 1533–1534 Bible: '[...] and also given in the margin, the origins of towns, lands, and kingdoms, in addition to the reigning Kings of Israel, as well as pagan Kings and Prophets'.

Liesvelt, and Vorsterman in his wake, most probably drew from the *Fasciculus temporum*, a Latin world chronicle, written by the Cologne Carthusian Werner Rolevinck (1425–1502), who often refers to Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and especially to book 15. *Fasciculus temporum* was first printed in 1474, but went through several reprints everywhere in Europe, including one by Johann Veldener in Louvain, in 1475–76. The same printer issued a Dutch version in Utrecht in 1480.⁵⁷ The end of the fifteenth and the first decades of the sixteenth century had also seen the appearance of several editions of Jerome's *Chronicon* or *Temporum liber* (ca. 380), which was in turn a Latin translation and update of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon* (ca. 311). As has been indicated, Eusebius and Jerome had based their calculations of biblical chronology on the Septuagint. Eusebius' chronology, in addition to other sources from classical and patristic origin, was also the basis for the *Historiarum et chronicorum mundi epitome*, composed by the Augsburg physician Achilles Pirminius Gassar, and first edited in Basel by Henricus Petri in August 1532, followed soon after by several publications in the Low Countries.⁵⁸ It is, however, improbable that Liesvelt had managed to include some of Gassar's computations in the margin of the Bible that was published in October 1532 (although Liesvelt is renowned for his ability to take prompt advantage of all kinds of developments on the market). Vorsterman for his part could have made use of Gassar's work for his 1533–34 Bible. Not long after the publication of Vorsterman's Bible, Simon Cock published in Antwerp the *Chronica Compendiosissima* [...] composed by the Louvain Franciscan humanist Amandus of Zierikzee (†1524) and with similar materials and with a comparable division of history in like periods to the abovementioned works. This edition had

⁵⁷ A work entitled *Fasciculus Temporum. Historiën van Adam tot Christus*, was edited by Claes de Grave in Antwerp 1529, with only one copy extant, viz., in the Royal Library in The Hague. This work had no demonstrable influence on the glosses in the Liesvelt or Vorsterman Bible.

⁵⁸ In 1533, three Latin editions were published in Antwerp: in June 1533, Johannes Grapheus printed an edition for Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten and another for Joannes Steels, whereas Hillen Van Hoochstraten printed one on his own account in October of the same year. In 1536, Grapheus printed another Latin edition for Steels. Soon Dutch translations of the book were to follow (*Een Chronijcke* . . .): in Antwerp, a Dutch edition appeared with Wouter van Lin in 1533 and 1534 (printed by Adriaen van Berghen?), whereas Van Bergen printed one on his own account in 1534. In Amsterdam, in 1534, a Dutch translation appeared with Jan Seversz. die Croepel. A French version (*Brief recueil de toutes chroniques et hystoires*) was published by Martin Lempereur in Antwerp in 1534.



Fig. 5a. Woodcut illustration to the *Tower of Babel* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1532). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1532.

been taken care of by Amandus of Zierikzee's confrere Francis Titelmans, who completed the *Chronica* until 1534.⁵⁹

Apart from these historicizing chronological annotations, Vorsterman also added some short summaries and simple explanatory notes in the margin of his 1533–34 Bible, in some cases next to the text, in other cases beside some illustrations. As an example we refer to the gloss that accompanies the illustration to *Genesis* 11, the narrative of the Tower of Babel, where we read: 'Here the people were separated and divided in various tongues and languages' [Figs. 5a and 5b].⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Another edition may have been published by Simon Cock in 1536 or 1537, but no copies have been left.

⁶⁰ 'Hier werden die menschen gesceiden ende ghedeelt in verscheyden talen ende spraken'.

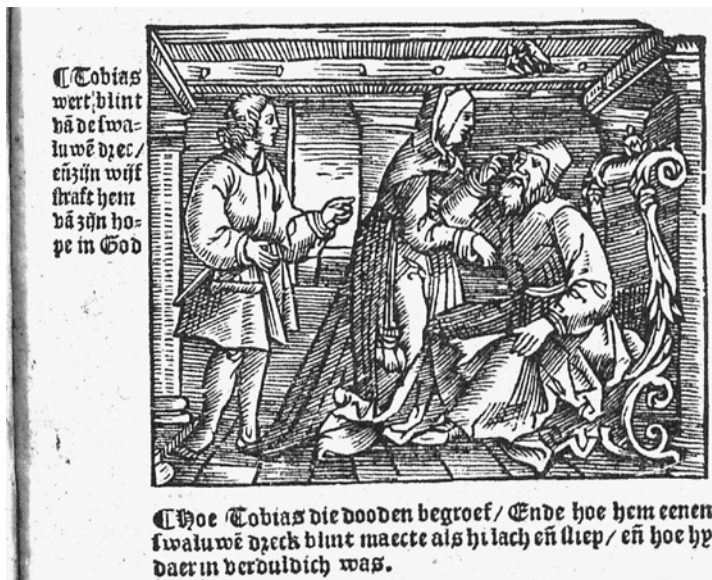


Fig. 5b. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the *Tower of Babel* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

An interesting case is also the opening page of the book of Tobias. The image is explained as 'Tobias is an example or model of extreme patience'. We also read: 'The book of Tobias is written in Chaldean and does not belong to the canon of the Holy Scriptures'.⁶¹ This marginal note was to be found in the Vorsterman Bible since the first edition of 1528, with only a slight change in its position in the 1533–34 edition, in which it was moved up and placed beside the illustration. The image of Tobias is surprisingly repeated on the mirror page, between chapter 1 and chapter 2, where it is provided with following commentary: 'Tobias became blind from the swallows' droppings, and his wife punishes him because of his hope in God' [Figs. 6a and 6b].⁶²

⁶¹ 'Tobias een exempel ofte schampelioen van alder verduldicheyt' and 'Dit boeck Tobie is in caldeeusche tale bescreven ende en is niet vander reghele der heylicher schrift'.

⁶² 'Tobias wert blint van de swaluwen drec/ ende zijn wijf straft hem van zijn hope in God'.



Figs. 6a&b. Woodcut illustrations and marginal glosses on the opening page of the book of *Tobias* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534).

KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533-34.

This brings us to another category of newly added annotations, namely, those with an outspoken typological slant and thus pointing to Old Testament motifs as prefigurations of the mysteries of the faith, and of the salutary events in the life of Christ, as well as of his mother Mary. Again, these annotations are included in the margin of either text passages or images. We first give a few examples of annotations to text passages. In *Genesis* 26:4–6, God renewed to Isaac the promise made to Abraham, in among other ways with the words: 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'. Next to this text, a cross-reference to *Romans* 4 is included, along with the gloss: 'Christ was promised to Isaac'.

As regards the deuterocanonical book Wisdom of Jesus Sirach, otherwise known as *Ecclesiasticus*, it should be observed that the edition of 1532 already contained many interpretative marginal annotations, to which the 1533–1534 edition added several others. One interesting annotation is to *Ecclesiasticus* 17:26ff. 'Tarry not in the error of the ungodly, confess your sins before death'. In the margin the gloss is added: 'We must confess or admit our sins'.⁶³ In this regard, it should be observed that the Dutch word used here, 'biechten', refers unambiguously to sacramental confession [Fig. 7].

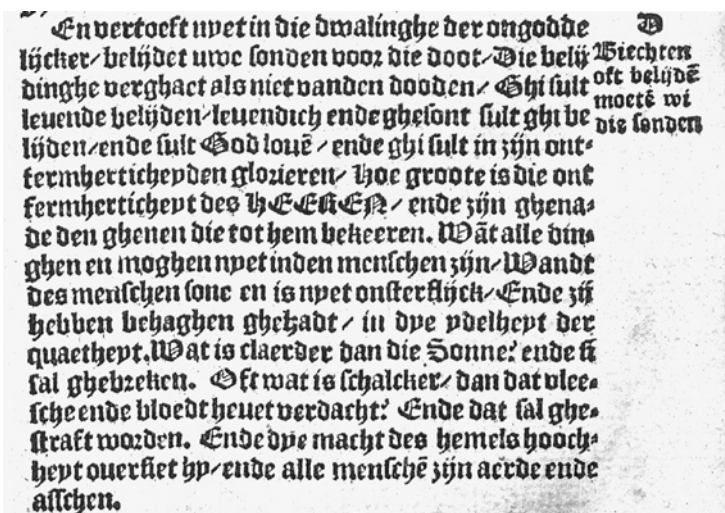


Fig. 7. Gloss to *Ecclesiasticus* 17:26ff (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

⁶³ 'Biechten oft belijden moeten wi die sonden'.

In Vorsterman's Bible editions of both 1532 and 1533–1534, the prophecies of Isaiah are preceded by summaries above the chapters. Strictly speaking, prophecies should be distinguished from types, where the former were assumed to refer literally to the coming Messiah. In the medieval typological tradition, the distinction was more or less clear, whereas for contemporary exegesis this is not the case, since it tends to critically question any Messianic, let alone the Christological, interpretation of the Prophets' words.⁶⁴ Whatever the case may be, in the summary to *Isaiah* 9 we read 'About Christ's birth/ and about his power and reign/ and the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem/ he prophesizes'.⁶⁵ In the edition of 1533–1534 this explanation is sustained by two additional marginal glosses. To *Isaiah* 9:2, 'The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen', the marginal note is added: 'The conversion of the pagans'.⁶⁶ To *Isaiah* 9:6: 'For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us [...]'], we find the simple annotation 'Christ Jesus' [Figs. 8a and 8b]. However, when a prophecy is indirect, being only an image that the tradition has later interpreted as a reference to the events accompanying the coming of the Messiah, Avril Henry concludes, 'it is hard to distinguish from a Type'. As an example he refers to 'Ezechiel's "door which is to be kept closed", interpreted as the inviolate virginity of Mary'.⁶⁷

Interesting to our topic of visual images as exegetical instruments are, of course, the typological annotations that had been added to the illustrations. Numerous images in sixteenth-century Bibles lend themselves to such a typological explanation, since it has been argued that in the course of the late Middle Ages, precisely those Old Testament motifs were illustrated that were considered as prefigurations of events in the life of Jesus and his mother, and of the mysteries of salvation history.⁶⁸ Such relationships had, of course, been the explicit rationale behind the illustration program of books such as the *Biblia Pauperum*⁶⁹ and *Speculum*

⁶⁴ Henry A. (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum* (Aldershot: 1987) 9.

⁶⁵ 'Van Christus gheboorte/ ende van zijnder macht ende rijk/ ende van die omworpinge van Juda ende Jerusalem propheteert hi'.

⁶⁶ 'Die bekeeringhe der heydenen'.

⁶⁷ Henry (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum* 9.

⁶⁸ See Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 88.

⁶⁹ Blockbooks containing the Latin version of the *Biblia Pauperum* may have already been printed in the Low Countries (by Laurens Jansz. Coster in Haarlem?) and the Low Rhineland in the 1430s. The oldest surviving copies, however, date from the years 1460–1470. We refer to [Legit[ur] in genesi .iiij. cap[itul]o q[uod] dixit d[omi]n[u]s serpenti super pect[us] tuu[m] gradier[is] [...]] = *Biblia Pauperum* (Low Countries or Low Rhineland:

Dat volck dat wandelende was in duysternisse/ Die beke-
 sach een groot licht/ den ghenen die in dē lande der ruyghe ver-
 schaduwde des doots woonende sijn/ hen is dat licht heydener.
 opgebegaen. **S**hi hebt dat volc vermenichfuldicht/
 en ghi en hebt die bliscap niet vermenichfuldicht/
 si sullen verblinden voor u/ gheluck die hen verblide
 inden oogst/ ghelijc hen verblide die victoriose ver-
 winners/ wannec si den buet tot deelen.

Christus **I**esus. **W**ant een cleyn kind is ons ghebozen/ en een so-
 ne is ons ghegheuen/ en die heerlicheit sal op sijn
 schouderen sijn/ en sinen naem sal wonderlijc ghe-
 heeten worden/ een raettheere/ **G**od/ sterf een va-
 der der toecomender werelt/ een prince des vzeets.

Figs. 8a&b. Glosses to *Isaiah* 9 (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

humanae salvationis,⁷⁰ that were very popular in the late medieval Low Countries and the Low Rhineland. Additionally, in these books the relationship between types and antitypes was clarified by accompanying (biblical) texts, which ‘are an integral part of the images’ meaning, part of the

ca. 1465). See also the online copy from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Xylogr. 28 (urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00038190-7; accessed 25-08-2012). For further reference, apart from the abovementioned book by Henry (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum*, see also Labriola A.C. – Smeltz J.W. (eds.), *The Bible of the Poor [Biblia Pauperum]: A Facsimile and Edition of the British Library Blockbook C.9 d.2* (Pittsburgh PA: 2012). Further: Musper H.T., *Die Urausgaben der holländischen Apokalypse und Biblia pauperum* (Munich: 1961); Henry A., “The Iconography of the Forty-page Blockbook *Biblia pauperum*: Form and Meaning”, in Mertens S. – Purpus E. – Schneider C. (eds.), *Blockbücher des Mittelalters: Bilderfolgen als Lektüre* (Mainz: 1991) 263–288; Nellhaus T., “Mementos of Things to Come: Orality, Literacy, and Typology in the *Biblia pauperum*”, in Hindman S. (ed.), *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520* (Ithaca – London: 1991) 292–321.

⁷⁰ From the 1460s, we find prints from the *Speculum humanae salvationis*: besides two Latin editions, two Dutch prose versions have been identified, all preserved in proto-typographical or xylographic prints. For our study we refer to the famous print of September 1483 by Johann Veldener, in Culemborg: *Spiegel onser behoudnisse [Speculum humanae salvationis]* (Culemborg, Johann Veldener: 1483). See also the online copy from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rar. 713 (urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00038555-8; accessed 25-08-2012). For further reading, see Wilson A. – Wilson J.L. (eds.), *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis 1324–1500* (Berkeley CA: 1984); Labriola A.C. – Smeltz J.W. (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation [Speculum Humanae Salvationis]: An Edition of British Library Blockbook G. 1784* (Cambridge: 2002). See also Verougstraete-Marcq H. – Van Schoute R., “Le Speculum Humanae Salvationis considéré dans ses rapports avec la Biblia Pauperum et le Canticum Canticorum”, *De Gulden Passer* 53 (1975) 363–379.

iconography'.⁷¹ It goes without saying that the older medieval typological tradition was only partially 'canonized' in these blockbooks and that, in its totality, it had a greater influence on the choices that were made regarding the depiction of Old Testament motifs. And although it is also true that a part of the sixteenth-century readership, in particular those readers who were influenced by the 'new' humanist and Reformation-minded ideas, also harbored critical thoughts regarding the late medieval typological tradition,⁷² the marginal notes in Vorsterman's 1533–34 Bible are, in their attribution of an explicit typological interpretation to some illustrations, in alignment with this tradition.

To *Genesis* 18, where the three men or angels appear to Abraham at the oak of Mamre, the gloss is added: 'The image or prefiguration of the Divine Trinity, since he saw three men and worshipped one'.⁷³ This explanation positions itself in the tradition of late medieval typology and more specifically the *Biblia Pauperum*, where the same words are even to be found: 'He saw three, and he worshipped one'. The phrase has a long pedigree and can be traced back to the Church fathers [Fig. 9].⁷⁴

To *Genesis* 37, an image was attached of Joseph being cast into an old pit by his brothers, who, however, drew him out to sell him to the Ishmaelites. In the margin is written: 'The image or prefiguration of Christ our Savior'.⁷⁵ The question is, of course, whether the viewers of this image were able to recall to mind the tradition of the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, which considered the fact that Jacob's sons had betrayed their brother Joseph and had cast him into the pit, as a prefiguration of Christ's entombment, and that Joseph being sold to the

⁷¹ Henry, "The Iconography of the Forty-page Blockbook *Biblia pauperum*" 274.

⁷² J.P. Filedt Kok has 'reconstructed' a *Biblia Pauperum* containing woodcuts made by Jacob Cornelisz. and Lucas van Leyden, and published around 1530 in a Latin, Dutch and French version by the Amsterdam printer-publisher Doen Pietersoen. According to the author, it concerns the last edition of a *Biblia Pauperum*, with the proviso that the accompanying texts to the biblical images even avoid the establishment of explicit typological connections and involve mainly biblical quotations relating to the images. Filedt Kok sees here an indication that the interest in typology, due to the changing spirit of the times, was on the wane (Filedt Kok J.P., "Een *Biblia pauperum* met houtsneden van Jacob Cornelisz. en Lucas van Leyden gereconstrueerd", *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 36 [1988] 83–110).

⁷³ 'Die figure vander dryevuldicheit gods/ dat hi drie mannen sach ende een aenbadt'.

⁷⁴ *Biblia Pauperum*, fol. 7r; cf. Henry (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum* 71; Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Bible of the Poor* 26, 68, 110, 157–158.

⁷⁵ 'Figure van christo onsen salich maker'. Cf. gloss to the image of Isaac carrying the wood for his sacrifice on his back (*Genesis* 22), which reads: 'Figure van Jesum onsen salichmaker/ die God Vader gheoffert heeft voor ons mesdaet'.



Fig. 9. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to *Three Men that Visit Abraham* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.



Fig. 10. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to *Joseph Cast into the Pit* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

Ishmaelites was viewed as a prefiguration of Judas having sold Jesus (to the Jews) for thirty pieces of silver [Fig. 10].⁷⁶

By *Exodus* 3, Moses before the burning bush, written in the margin we read: 'This bush burned but was not consumed, which is a figure of the immaculate virginity of Mary, Mother of God'.⁷⁷ The bush that burnt without being consumed was traditionally seen as a prefiguration of Mary having conceived Jesus 'without being consumed by the flames of concupiscence' and thus without compromising her virginity. This is at least, the explanation we also find in both the *Biblia Pauperum* and *Speculum humanae salvationis*.⁷⁸ The word 'immaculate', 'onbevleekt' in Middle Dutch, may also recall to the mind Mary's Immaculate Conception, the belief that Mary was kept free from the stain of original sin from the very moment of her conception (which should not be confused with her lasting virginity). The view, however, that the burning bush was a prefiguration of Mary's Immaculate Conception was not as widespread as the belief that it was a prefiguration of Mary's virginity, and the view developed only gradually, when the theological debate of the Immaculate Conception also unfolded, with as its apogee the establishment of the liturgical feast for the entire Church, with a proper mass and office, by the Franciscan Pope Sixtus IV through the bull *Cum Praeelsa* (1477) [Fig. 11].⁷⁹

By *Exodus* 16, of the manna that falls from heaven, we read that it is 'the image or prefiguration of the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar, which is food and sustenance for those who are on their way in this life, traveling to the land of promise, of eternal salvation'.⁸⁰ The manna in the desert as a prefiguration of the Eucharistic bread, Christ himself given to

⁷⁶ *Biblia Pauperum*, fol. 11v and 17v; cf. Henry (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum* 82, 102; Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Bible of the Poor* 31, 73, 115, 161–162, and 41, 83, 126, 171. And *Spiegel onser behoudenis*, fol. 111v–112r; cf. Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation* 69, 173–174; Wilson – Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Mirror* 193.

⁷⁷ 'Dit bosch bernende ende niet verbermende / is een figuer van de onbevleekte maechdoms des moeder Gods Maria'.

⁷⁸ *Biblia pauperum*, fol. 1r; cf. Henry (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum* 51; Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Bible of the Poor* 16, 58, 100, 145–146. And *Spiegel onser behoudenis*, fol. 30v–31r; cf. Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation* 30, 103–104; Wilson – Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Mirror* 154; Harris E., 'Mary in the Burning Bush: Nicolas Froment's Triptych at Aix-en-Provence', *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937–38) 281–286 (see 281 for the quotation).

⁷⁹ A description of Mary being sanctified by the Holy Spirit before her birth and thus predestined to be 'the sinless vessel through whom the Son [would] be born', in *Spiegel onser behoudenis*, fol. 13v–17r; cf. Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation* 22–23, 86–91 (quotation, see 87); Wilson – Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Mirror* 27, also 148–149.

⁸⁰ 'Figure van dat alder weerdichste sacrament des outaers/ welck een spijsse ende starkinge is van den ghenen die inden wech van dit leven sijn: reysende na tlant der beloften des eewighen salicheyts'.



Fig. 11. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to *Moses before the Burning Bush* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F°/Bijb 1533–34.

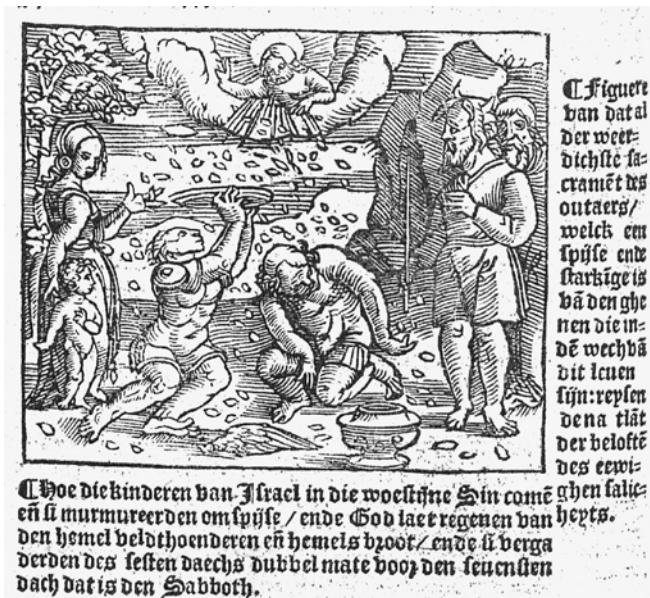


Fig. 12. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to *Manna that Comes Down from Heaven* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F°/Bijb 1533–34.

his people, is also to be found in the *Biblia Pauperum* and *Speculum humanae salvationis* [Fig. 12].⁸¹

By *Exodus* 25, we find a picture of the Ark of the Covenant, which is one of the pictures borrowed from the illustration tradition of Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*. To the picture of the tabernacle the marginal gloss is added: 'This is the image of the ark of the "testimony", which is a prefiguration of Mary, the Blessed Mother of God'.⁸² In the *Speculum humanae salvationis* in particular, we find an elaborate description of the way in which the ark is a prefiguration of Mary. In this regard, amongst other comments, it is said that the Ark of the Old Covenant contained the tablets with the Ten Commandments, which Mary had also interiorized and had observed in a perfect way. The ark further contained the golden pot, which contained manna, and the rod of Aaron, 'which became bright with flowers at certain times'. In this sense, it was also seen as a prefiguration of Mary – depicted as it were as the Ark of the New Covenant – whose womb blossomed, housed and brought forth a blessed fruit, Jesus, the real manna from heaven [Fig. 13].⁸³

By *Exodus* 25, we also find an image of the table, on which the so-called 'loaves of proposition' or 'showbread' was to be placed, which was likewise taken from the *Postilla*-tradition. This was, of course, considered as a prefiguration of the Sacrament of the Altar.⁸⁴ We do not, however, find this motif in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, nor in the *Biblia Pauperum* [Fig. 14].

From the above, it becomes clear that the typological explanations included in the margin of Vorsterman's 1533–34 Bible are in line with the late medieval interest in typology as we find it expressed in blockbooks such as the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, but that there is no one-to-one relationship between the typological expla-

⁸¹ *Biblia pauperum*, fol. 12r; cf. Henry (ed.), *Biblia Pauperum* 83; Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Bible of the Poor* 32, 74, 116, 162. And *Spiegel onser behoudenisse*, fol. 66rv–67r; cf. Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation* 48, 137; Wilson – Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Mirror* 172.

⁸² 'Dit is dye figure van die arcke des getuygenis welcke een figure is van Maria die ghebenedide moeder Gods'.

⁸³ See in particular *Spiegel onser behoudenisse*, fol. 42v°–43r°; cf. Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation* 36, 115; Wilson – Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Mirror* 160. See also *Biblia pauperum*, fol. 3r.

⁸⁴ 'Die tafel van der voorsettinck des broots figure van tsacrament des outaers'.



Fig. 13. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the *Ark of the Covenant* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

nations contained in the blockbooks and those included in Vorsterman's Bible. This means that not all typological explanations from the blockbooks are to be found in Vorsterman's Bible, not even the very obvious ones. In this regard we must, amongst other examples, observe that in Vorsterman's Bible, Job is not explicitly designated as a prefiguration of the suffering Christ.⁸⁵ Conversely, some of the typological connections that are made in Vorsterman's Bible are not to be found in the *Biblia Pauperum*, nor in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*. A good example are the loaves of proposition that in the Middle Ages were considered to be a figure of God's nourishing Word,⁸⁶ but that in early modern Catholic exegesis,

⁸⁵ See however *Spiegel onser behoudensse*, fol. 84r–84v; cf. Labriola – Smeltz (eds.), *The Mirror of Salvation* 57, 153; Wilson – Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Mirror* 181.

⁸⁶ See, e.g., the *Glossa Ordinaria* with a quotation from the Venerable Bede, *De tabernaculo*, 1, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A (Turnhout: 1969) 26 l. 851–27 l. 861.



Fig. 14. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the *Table with the Loaves of Proposition* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534).

KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

in controversy with the Protestants, were increasingly interpreted as a prefiguration of the Sacrament of the Altar.⁸⁷

One of the most intriguing questions is to discern who was behind the glosses in Vorsterman's 1533–1534 Bible. In an earlier contribution we advanced the hypothesis that it might have been William Van Branteghem who, around the same time, in 1535, published with Simon Cock in Antwerp his *Enchiridion, compluscula eorum quae in veteris testamenti* [sic] *sacris Bibliis traduntur, picturis expressa continens*.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Of the most obvious examples we refer to Clichtove J., *De sacramento eucharistiae, contra Oecolampadium* (Paris, Simon de Colines: 1526), fol. 19r–v; also 38v; Fisher J., *De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis in Eucharistia* [...] *adversus Iohannem Oecolampadium* lib. 5 cap. 15 (Cologne, Petrus Quentell: 1527), fol. 151rD. Both authors refer to Hieronymus, *Comm. in epist. ad Titum*, 1,8–9, ed. J.-P. Migne, PL 26 (Paris: 1845) 568 l. 48–569 l. 5.

⁸⁸ François, "Tradition, Words and Images in the 1548 Dutch 'Louvain Bible'" 207–208.

Closer consideration of Van Branteghem's treatment of Old Testament events and motifs eliminates him as a possible author of the annotations in Vorsterman's 1533–34 edition, since he dispenses with an important part of the late medieval typological tradition and sees the Old Testament motifs strictly as elements of salvation history or at the most as a prefiguration of Christ's salutary life and death. To mention only a few examples: *Exodus* 3, God appearing to Moses in a burning bush, was seen by Van Branteghem as a proof of God's fidelity to his elected people, passing over any reference to the virginity of Mary, let alone the Immaculate Conception. A similar picture arises with regard to Van Branteghem's understanding of the manna that is falling down from heaven, in *Exodus* 16: in his view the manna is a prefiguration of the real bread of life, which he, however, does not identify with the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, but with the Word that came from God's mouth, Jesus, through whose death people may live. Given Van Branteghem's spiritualizing and Christological interpretations, in contrast with the typological tradition (partly) codified in the *Biblia Pauperum*, *Speculum humanae salvationis* and so on, it is improbable that Van Branteghem was the author of the marginal notes in Vorsterman's Bible.

We should sooner consider a priest or a religious man who lived and thought in accordance with late medieval biblical spirituality. He was possibly a Franciscan, since the coat of arms of the Cardinal Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros figured on the title page, an allusion to Mary's Immaculate Conception was possibly discernible in the prologue, as well as, more generally speaking, a 'traditional biblical piety', in line with the Louvain biblical scholar and Franciscan Francis Titelmans, as Arblaster has argued.⁸⁹ To this, it should be added that, precisely in this period, Titelmans published his books with the Antwerp publishers, as well as an updated version of the *Chronica compendiosissima* of his confrere and predecessor, Amandus of Zierikzee. Finally, the gloss to *Exodus* 3, Moses before the burning bush, may contain another allusion to Mary's Immaculate Conception, a doctrine that found its most outspoken promoters in the Franciscan Order. All these elements suggest that a contribution of a Franciscan, conceivably Frans Titelmans, to Vorsterman, should be considered. This hypothesis needs however further confirmation.

⁸⁹ Arblaster, "Totius Mundi Emporium" 24–25.

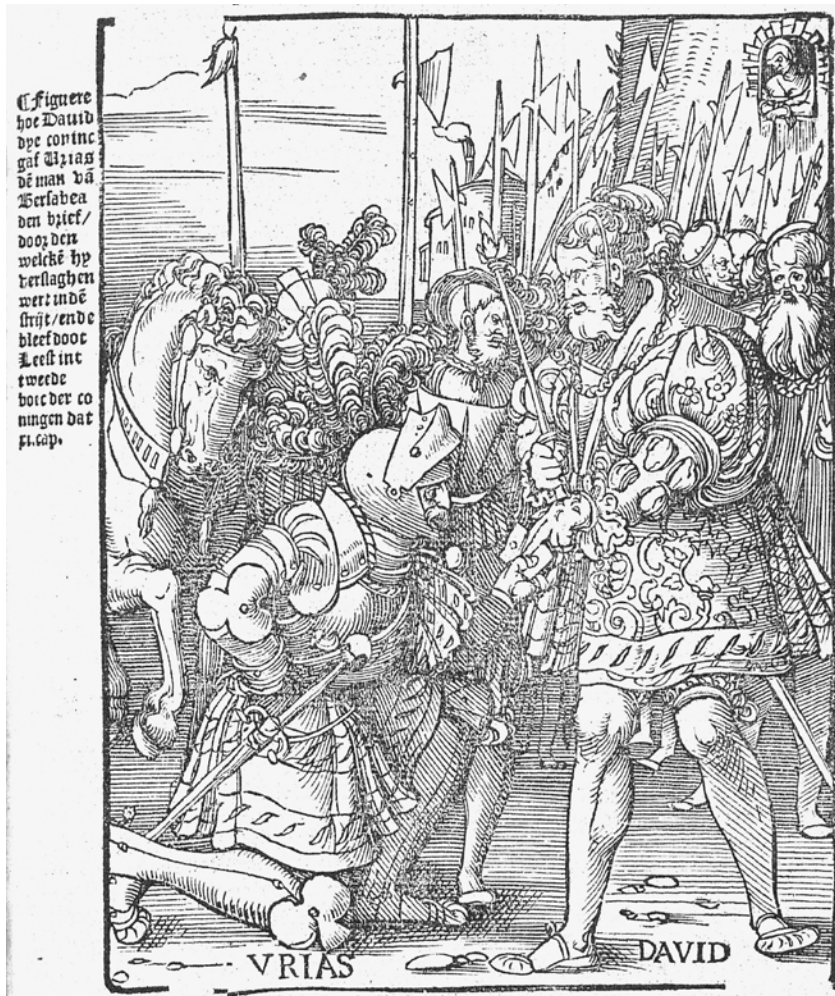


Fig. 15. Opening woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the book of *Psalms* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

Of interest for our topic is also the way the *Psalms* are dealt with. The book of *Psalms* opens, as it were, the second part of the Old Testament. This is emphasized by the inclusion of an image, larger than the great majority of the pictures, creating the impression of another opening page. Moreover, the numbering of the pages recommences. The marginal gloss to the opening picture is largely explanatory: 'Image of how King David gave to Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, the letter, by which he was defeated in combat, and was killed. Read in the second book of the Kings,

chapter 11' [Fig. 15].⁹⁰ On folio twenty, we find a beautiful illustration of how the Psalms are introduced with a short explanatory text that was not yet present in Vorsterman's former editions. The few lines of introduction seem to point in particular to the occasion on which the Psalm in question may be read. *Psalm* 108, *Deus, laudem meam, ne tacueris*, is introduced by the words: 'If you are the victim of deceitful tongues, sing this Psalm without anxiety'.⁹¹ Between the Psalms 108 and 109, a picture is included that anticipates the subject of *Psalm* 109, and this is provided with a marginal note reading: 'Image of Jesus Christ our Head, sitting on the right hand of his Father Almighty'.⁹² *Psalm* 109, the renowned psalm *Dixit Dominus Domino meo*, is introduced with the text: 'Reflecting on Christ's might and power, sing this hundred and ninth Psalm'.⁹³ *Psalm* 110, *Confitebor tibi domino*, is introduced with the words: 'If you are going to God's table of the Holy Sacrament, sing first with joy this Psalm 110' [Fig. 16].⁹⁴

Before we move to the New Testament, we will first have a look at the – somewhat 'confused'⁹⁵ – opening picture of the book of *Ezekiel*, which stems from the *Postilla*-tradition, and which relates to the four animals Ezekiel saw in his vision of the mystic wheel: 'The vision that the prophet Ezekiel saw, according to both the Hebrew and Latin interpretation' [Fig. 17].⁹⁶

Moving to the Gospels, we see that the pictures of the Evangelists are related to this vision of Ezekiel. The anonymous author of the marginal glosses, however, does not see the four creatures primarily as references to the Evangelists and their Gospel as such, but rather to the image of Christ portrayed in the Gospel in question.⁹⁷ Next to the portrait of Matthew is

⁹⁰ 'Figure hoe David dye coninc gaf Urias den man van Bersabea den brief/ door den welcken hy verslaghen wert inden strijt/ ende bleef doot Leest int tweede boec der coningen dat xi. cap'.

⁹¹ 'Wert ghi gequelt van valsche tonghen/ singet sonder sorge desen Psalme'.

⁹² 'figure van het sitten (?) Christi Jesu ons hoofts aen die rechterhant zijns vaders almachtich'.

⁹³ 'Denckende die macht ende cracht Christi/ Singhet desen hondert neghensten Psalme'.

⁹⁴ 'Gaet ghi ter tafelen Gods te sacramento/ singhet eerst in vrolicheyt desen 110. Psalme'.

⁹⁵ Bart Rosier explains how this picture has become confused: Jacob Sacon had the double depiction of Ezekiel's vision 'secundum hebreos' and 'secundum latinos' combined into one single print, in order to include it in his Bibles of a smaller format (1518–1521). A not so attentive copyist delivered a copy in which 'the representations and the inscriptions got garbled', with an inscription reading: 'Seoundum. Hebreos / Mundum Latinos'. See Rosier, *The Bible in Print* I 69. Such a copy also appeared in Lempereur's Bible of 1530 and thus in Vorsterman's 1532 edition.

⁹⁶ 'Dat visioen ofte gesichte dat Ezechiel die propheete sach / nader Hebreuscher ende latijnscher opinien'.

⁹⁷ Male E., *Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century: A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*, English trans. of the 9th ed., Bollingen Series 90/2 (Princeton NJ:

[illegible]



Fig. 17. Opening woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the book of Ezekiel (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

written: 'This Gospel of Matthew relates most to Jesus Christ's humanity. Therefore he is represented by the angel in Ezekiel's vision. Ezek. 1'.⁹⁸ Next to the illustration of Mark (one of the copies after Holbein) we read, as a sort of commentary to the painting of the resurrection in the background: 'This Gospel of Mark speaks more clearly than the others of Christ's glorious and saintly powerful resurrection'. And, establishing a link with Ezekiel's vision the comment is added: 'Therefore he is represented by the lion in Ezekiel's vision. Ezek. 1'.⁹⁹ Next to the portrait of Luke (also

1984) 38–40, with a reference to Rhabanus Maurus, *Comment. in Ezechielem*, 1, ed. J.-P. Migne, PL 110 (Paris: 1852) 515 C–D. The text of Rhabanus Maurus found its way to several medieval lectionaries, such as the Lectionary of Crépy (Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, ms. 162, fols. 222ff.).

⁹⁸ 'Dit Euangelium mathei spreekt meest van de menscheit Christi Jesu/ daerom wert hy beduyt met den enghel in Ezechiels visioen Ezech. 1'.

⁹⁹ 'Dit euangelium Marci spreekt clareliker dan dandere van die gloriose ende vrome stercke verijsenisse christi nae der doot / daer om wert hi ghefigureert int visioen van Ezechiel de propheet bi den leeuwe. Ezech. 1'. Cf. Male, *Religious Art in France* 40: 'The lion is the symbol of the Resurrection. Here again we come upon the fabulous science of the bestiaries: the lion, in fact was thought to sleep with its eyes open. This, the lectionary [of Crépy] tells us, is a symbol of Christ in the tomb: "The Redeemer, in fact, seemed to sleep



Fig. 18. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss on the opening page of the *Gospel of Matthew* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

a Holbein copy), in which a crucifixion is depicted like a painting in the background, is printed: 'This Gospel of Luke is more modest than the others, for it speaks of the death of Jesus Christ, through which He has sacrificed himself to the Father for our sins. Therefore, in Ezekiel's vision, he is represented by the picture of the sacrifice of an ox (a calf). Ezek. 1'.¹⁰⁰ This series is abruptly interrupted, since there is no commentary beside John the Evangelist (a Holbein copy). This is evidently not a decision made on principle, but it seems as though the glossator had not yet completed his work when the time came for the pages to be printed [Figs. 18–21].

in death, as his humanity demanded, but by virtue of his divinity he remained immortal, and was awake". This is, of course, a quotation from Rhabanus Maurus, *Comment. in Ezechielem* 1, ed. Migne, PL 110, 515 l. 41–46.

¹⁰⁰ 'Dit euangelium van sinte Lucas is bescheydeliker dan die andere: sprekende van die doot christi iesu / inden welcken hi hem selven voor ons zonden den vader op geoffert heeft / daer om wert hi ons int visioen van Ezechiel beduyt by een beestken des offerhanden een kalf. Ezechie. 1'.



Fig. 19. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the *Gospel of Mark* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.



Fig. 20. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the *Gospel of Luke* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.



Fig. 21. Woodcut illustration to the opening page of the *Gospel of John* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

By way of example, I refer to a few notes that are printed in the margin to Gospel narratives. Next to the image illustrating *Matthew 20*, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, the gloss gives in a moralizing sense: 'Our life is a continual laboring in the vineyard of the Lord: this we are taught through this parable'.¹⁰¹ Apart from the Gospels, few marginal glosses are to be found [Fig. 22].

Conclusion

When Vorsterman brought a glossed Bible onto the market in the years of 1533–1534, he obviously responded to the edition that his colleague and

¹⁰¹ 'Ons leven te zijn een gestadich wercken inde wijngaert des heeren: leert ons dese parabel'.



Fig. 22. Woodcut illustration and marginal gloss to the *Laborers in the Vineyard* (Antwerp, Willem Vorsterman: 1534). KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, P 22.055.1/F^o/Bijb 1533–34.

most formidable competitor, Jacob van Liesvelt, had published a year earlier. Liesvelt's 1532 Bible, however, contained glosses that were limited to chronological or merely explicatory annotations and did not include any typological reflections. This is quite understandable, given the Reformation-minded slant of Van Liesvelt's 1532 Bible, apparent through its text that follows Luther's editions closely, as well as through the inclusion of a short prologue that was an excerpt of Luther's prologue to his 1523 edition of the Pentateuch. Vorsterman, for his part, had a more traditional audience in mind when he decided to provide his largely 'vulgarized' text with typological explications, in addition to merely explicatory glosses and chronological connections. He responded to an interest among his readers that had persisted since the late Middle Ages. In this regard, it is significant that precisely the *Fasciculus temporum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis* were among the first books of the Low Countries for which wood blocks were used, and that both were edited in a Dutch version by Johann Veldener.¹⁰² About half a century later, Vorsterman again

¹⁰² For his Dutch *Fasciculus temporum* from 1480, Veldener used copies from the *Speculum* woodblocks, which came into his possession in that very period. For his 1483 printing of the *Speculum*, he used all fifty-eight original blocks, which he had sawn in two (van Thienen G., "Eine letzte Spur des 'Speculum humanae salvationis' bei Johannes de

responded to a persisting interest among his readers and relied on the same late medieval tradition when he decided to bring his glossed Bible onto the market. Vorsterman's explanatory glosses, chronological connections, and typological explanations to both text and images must, however, share the margin of the Old Testament with manifold references to the Hebrew text, hands with a pointing finger, as well as cross-references to other biblical texts. In this way, distinctive late medieval and characteristic humanist interests are united in the margin of a single Bible edition. It results in a rather eclectic glossed Bible, reflecting wonderfully a time when Catholics also ventured to be more creative in dealing with the biblical text, juxtaposing elements from various religious contexts, confronting them with one another, in search of a new equilibrium.¹⁰³ This kind of edition, however, was brought to a definite halt in 1546, when the Louvain theologians decreed that a Catholic vernacular Bible should be a Vulgate translation, stripped of all marginal glosses, and brought the so-called Louvain Bible onto the market.

Westfalia in Löwen", in Mertens – Purpus – Schneider [eds.], *Blockbücher des Mittelalters* 311–317).

¹⁰³ Cf. François, "The Compositors' Neglect".

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L'ÉPITAPHE DE JAN MICHIELSEN ET MARIA MAES DE RUBENS.
RHÉTORIQUE ET EXÉGÈSE VISUELLE¹

Colette Nativel

L'Épithaphe de Jan Michielsens et Maria Maes, intitulée aussi *le Christ à la paille* [Fig. 1], a été très souvent étudiée. Outre ceux de J.R. Judson², les travaux de Colin Eisler, de Leo Wuyts, puis de Lynn Jacobs, en particulier,



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 4] Pieter Paul Rubens, *Epitaph of Jan Michielsens and his Wife Maria Maes* (1618). Oil on wood, 138 × 178 cm. Antwerp, Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

¹ Je dois remercier très vivement Walter Melion et Michel Weemans d'avoir suscité cette recherche et de l'avoir stimulée par leurs conversations et leurs travaux. La lecture de la thèse de Michel Weemans consacrée à Bles (sous presse) a nourri ma réflexion sur le détail exégétique, celle des travaux de Walter Melion, en particulier son volume *The Meditative Art. Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550-1625* (Philadelphia: 2009), m'ont permis d'approfondir mes recherches sur la lecture des images de dévotion. Merci aussi à Joseph Chorprenning de m'avoir procuré cet ouvrage précieux. Et à Marilyn Aronberg Lavin de son attentive relecture.

² Judson J.R., *Rubens, The Passion of Christ*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 6 (Turnhout: 2001) 222-228.

ont montré comment Rubens s'appuie sur la tradition du triptyque ancien flamand et la renouvelle³. La plus récente analyse, très synthétique et très fine, que Paul Huvenne a donnée à l'occasion de l'exposition *De Quinten Metsijs à Peter Paul Rubens*, souligne très justement la richesse sémantique du retable⁴. Pourtant, ce triptyque mérite qu'on s'y arrête encore, d'un point de vue un peu différent, car il offre un exemple particulièrement remarquable de la façon dont Rubens utilise la rhétorique pour mettre en place une exégèse visuelle dont tous les aspects n'ont pas été analysés.

Peint par Rubens, en 1617-1618, à la demande de Maria Maes, pour être l'épithaphe de son mari, ce triptyque représente sur le panneau central une lamentation sur le Christ mort, sur la face interne du volet gauche, une Vierge à l'Enfant, sur celle du volet droit, saint Jean l'Évangéliste. Sur la face externe des volets sont peints en grisaille, à gauche, le Christ Salvador Mundi, à droite, une Vierge à l'Enfant⁵.

Le premier effet produit par ce triptyque est l'émotion. En bon lecteur des anciens, Rubens connaît les *officia dicendi* de l'orateur que Cicéron avait exposés dans ses traités⁶ : *docere, delectare, permovere*. S'agissant du peintre, l'ordre en est inversé. Cicéron lui-même d'ailleurs n'avait pas adopté un ordre constant. Ainsi que Junius le montrera quelques années plus tard dans le *De pictura veterum libri tres*, c'est d'abord l'émotion que

³ Eisler C., « Rubens' Uses of the Northern Past : *The Michiels Triptych* and Its Sources », *Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique – Bulletin* 16 (1967) 43-78; Wuyts L., « Bij de iconographie van twee Rubensschilderijen : De Bewening van Christus en Christus op het stro », *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1991) 61-86; idem, « Christus op het stro. Enkele bedenkingen bij het epitaphium van Jan Michielsens », *Kwintet* 30 (1996) 18-23 (je remercie Jeanine de Landtsheer, K.U.L. de m'avoir fait parvenir cet article introuvable en France); Jacobs L.F., « Rubens and the Northern Past : *The Michielsens Triptych* and the Thresholds of Modernity », *The Art Bulletin* 91/3 (2009) 302-324; et les pages de sa toute récente étude consacrée au triptyque néerlandais, *Opening Doors: The Early Netherlandish Triptych Reinterpreted* (University Park, Pa.: 2012) 262-264.

⁴ Huvenne P., « Épitaphe de Jan Michielsens et Maria Maes », in Fabri R. – Van Hout N. (eds.), *De Quinten Metsijs à Peter Paul Rubens: chefs-d'œuvre du Musée royal réunis dans la cathédrale*, (Antwerp: 2009) 179-187.

⁵ Sur le caractère autographe des différentes parties du triptyque, voir Jacobs, « Rubens and the Northern Part: *The Michielsens Triptych* 320, note 3.

⁶ Cicéron, *Brutus* 185; *De oratore* 2, 159; *Orator* 69: 'Sera donc éloquent [...] celui qui, au forum et dans les causes civiles, parlera de façon à prouver, à plaire, à émouvoir [...] Mais les devoirs de l'orateur sont aussi nombreux que les genres de styles: simple dans la démonstration, moyen dans le plaisir, véhément dans l'émotion, dans laquelle seulement réside la puissance de l'orateur' ('Erit igitur eloquens [...] is qui in foro causisque civilibus ita dicet, ut probet, ut delectet, ut flectat [...] Sed quot officia oratoris, tot sunt genera dicendi: subtile in probando, modicum in delectando, vehemens in flectendo; in quo uno vis omnis oratoris est'); et *De optimo genere dicendi* 3, repris par Quintilien, *Institution oratoire* 3, 4, 2.

suscite un beau tableau, sa 'lecture' arrivant dans un second temps⁷. Ainsi Rubens veut d'abord faire naître un sentiment de compassion chez le spectateur qui découvre le tableau. Le panneau central, sur lequel s'arrête dans un premier temps son regard, est conçu à cette fin.

Ce panneau, qui représente une scène de lamentation, expose, d'une façon particulièrement violente le corps du Christ mort, entouré de quatre figures. Tout y est conçu pour rendre présent ce corps martyrisé. Le format lui-même – la hauteur du panneau central est de 1m38, sa largeur de 98 cm⁸ – participe à cette mise en valeur. Le corps mort du Christ, présenté avant la toilette mortuaire, peint jusqu'en-dessous des genoux, est presque grandeur nature. Disposé sur la diagonale, de droite à gauche, il s'étend sur la partie avant du panneau. Le reste du panneau, plus sombre et coloré, est occupé, dans sa partie supérieure, par les quatre personnages qui l'entourent. De ces figures, on ne voit presque que les visages qui expriment leurs sentiments et les bras et les mains qui montrent leurs actions. Le corps, drapé dans un linceul, a été posé sur la pierre d'onction couverte de paille, qui occupe la partie inférieure gauche. Sa disposition indique bien qu'il s'agit d'un cadavre. Il est comme disloqué en trois éléments, la position de chacun variant légèrement. Le buste, légèrement penché vers l'arrière et tenu par Nicodème est presque droit. La tête tombe sur l'épaule gauche. La partie inférieure du corps, posé sur la pierre, est couverte d'un linceul.

Les éléments nécessaires à la narration – le Christ et quatre autres personnages, la pierre d'onction, la paille, le linceul – sont donc les seuls offerts au regard du spectateur. Aucun détail superflu ne vient distraire le spectateur de son émotion, chaque élément contribuant à la susciter. Le cadavre est peint avec une précision presque médicale. Sa pâleur est soulignée par plusieurs procédés. D'abord, elle contraste avec la couleur des visages des vivants, sauf celui de la Vierge. Cette lividité cadavérique apparaît plus vivement par comparaison avec la blancheur du linceul qui couvre les hanches et les jambes du Christ. La main et l'avant-bras gauche du Christ qui reposent sur le linceul, la main droite sur la paille sont grisâtres. Ce n'est que dans un second temps que le dévot aperçoit les

⁷ Junius F., *De pictura ueterum libri tres* (Amsterdam: apud Blaev, 1637; 2^e éd., Rotterdam: Typis R. Leers, 1694), livre III, chap. 6, §. 5. Je me permets de renvoyer à mon article Nativel C., « La théorie de l'enargeia dans le *De pictura ueterum* de Franciscus Junius: sources antiques et développements modernes », *Prospect* (Sorbonne Nouvelle sér.) 1 (1992) 73-85.

⁸ Les panneaux latéraux ont 40 cm. de largeur; ouvert, le triptyque mesure donc 2m18 de large.

marques du fouet sur l'épaule gauche et les diverses plaies, que le regard ne peut s'empêcher de chercher. La plaie au côté est béante, et le sang coule abondamment jusqu'au linceul. La position des mains empêche de montrer directement les plaies qu'elles portent. Celles-ci sont néanmoins évoquées par le sang qui a coulé et s'est coagulé sur les avant-bras, les mains du crucifié se trouvant, sur la croix, plus haut que les bras. Enfin, la posture de la tête, légèrement rejetée en arrière, fait apparaître les lèvres violacées, les cheveux et le front souillés de sang et un caillot de sang qui bouche la narine gauche.

Cette pénible description montre assez que tout est fait pour susciter la pitié du spectateur. Rubens suit ici la tradition flamande de l'homme de douleurs' qu'il renouvelle par la précision médicale avec laquelle il décrit le cadavre. L'iconographie de l'homme de douleurs' est assez floue pour qu'on puisse employer cette expression à propos des lamentations de Rubens⁹. En effet, si l'on tente d'élaborer une typologie des 'hommes de douleurs' qu'a laissés la tradition flamande, on remarque un certain nombre de variations. Le lieu est le plus souvent indéterminé. Le moment varie. L'homme de douleurs' peut être représenté après la flagellation et le couronnement d'épines, ou avant, comme aussi après la crucifixion. Seule la présence ou l'absence de la couronne d'épines et de celle des plaies des mains, des pieds et du côté apporte une éventuelle indication. Souvent l'homme de douleurs' est seul, assis, représenté à mi corps, mais il peut être aussi entouré d'anges. Au XVII^e siècle, et spécialement chez Rubens, on remarque dans les lamentations une disposition des figures qui vise à montrer non seulement le Christ mort, mais encore les plaies qu'il porte.

La pitié que suscite ce spectacle est mise en scène, à l'intérieur du panneau, par les figures qui entourent le Christ, chacune l'éprouvant elle-même et chacune contribuant à la susciter chez le spectateur. Il est d'ailleurs remarquable que, mise à part la Vierge, ces figures ne soient pas clairement identifiables. À gauche, on hésite entre Nicodème et Joseph d'Arimathie. Et il est bien difficile de décider, dans un premier temps, qui sont les deux autres figures, sans doute Marie-Madeleine et saint Jean qui accompagnent presque toujours la Vierge dans les lamentations. Marie-Madeleine serait à droite de Marie – le voile qu'on aperçoit sur la tête le

⁹ Sur ces questions, voir Belting H., *L'image et son public au Moyen Âge* (Paris: 1998); Panofsky E., « Imago Pietatis: ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des 'Schmerzensmanns' und der 'Maria Mediatrix' », in *Festschrift für Max Friedlaender zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: 1927) 261-308; Ringbom S., *Les images de dévotion, XII^e-XV^e siècle* (Paris: 1995).

laisse supposer – et saint Jean, dont on n'aperçoit que le visage, à gauche de Marie. L'identification précise des figures n'est ici que d'une importance secondaire. L'appel à la pitié l'emporte sur la narration. Il s'agit de montrer la peine immense ressentie par les proches du Christ. Toutes tournées vers le Christ mort, les yeux baissés – sauf la Vierge –, ces figures expriment la douleur la plus profonde. Des larmes coulent visiblement sur les joues de Madeleine. Le cas de la Vierge est très différent. On la reconnaît bien sûr à la traditionnelle association du bleu et du rouge de son vêtement, quoique cette indication soit ici bien superflue. C'est l'expression de la *Dolorosa* qui frappe d'abord le spectateur. La Mère vit dans son corps la mort de son Fils et en reproduit les marques: pâleur cadavérique du visage, lèvres violacées et entrouvertes et touche de rouge qui ourle ses yeux mouillés de larmes. Cette identification est encore soulignée par la position de sa tête penchée vers la droite, comme celle de son Fils.

Deux des figures – Joseph d'Arimathie ou Nicodème et Marie – jouent un rôle particulier dans la scène. Elles contribuent à l'épiphanie du corps mort. Le premier tient le buste du Christ de façon à le présenter au spectateur, Marie offre à sa vue le visage douloureux de son Fils en soulevant le linceul au-dessus de sa tête. Enfin, les mains jointes de saint Jean invitent le fidèle à la prière.

Ce panneau est, en quelque sorte, l'aboutissement d'un travail commencé par Rubens dès son séjour en Italie. Certes la *Lamentation* qu'il y peignit en 1602 et qui est conservée à la villa Borghèse est totalement fidèle à la tradition italienne. Mais, en même temps qu'il compose cette première lamentation conforme au goût italien [Fig. 2], Rubens en élabore un nouveau type. Comme Judson le remarque très justement¹⁰, le petit cuivre [Fig. 3] peint, vraisemblablement pour le Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, au début de son séjour en Italie, présente déjà une rupture avec les lamentations traditionnelles. Et Judson souligne que Rubens insiste sur la peine des participants en mettant cette lamentation en rapport avec *Héro pleurant*

¹⁰ Ce petit tableau de méditation, daté de 1601-1602 (une huile sur cuivre de 27,5 × 24 cm) fut sans doute peint pour le Cardinal Ascanio Colonna dont Philip Rubens, le frère de Pieter Paul, sera secrétaire et bibliothécaire en 1605-1606. Le verso porte le sceau des Colonna et il se trouvait encore dans un inventaire de la famille en 1783. Selon Judson, *Rubens* 210: 'Rubens departs from the usual manner of rendering this theme [...] He does not place Christ in the Virgin's lap as had been customary since Michelangelo, nor does he depict Christ seated on a sarcophagus and supported by the Virgin [...] Rubens does not follow the same design for the Lamentation that Correggio introduces in his painting [...] but presents an original arrangement'.

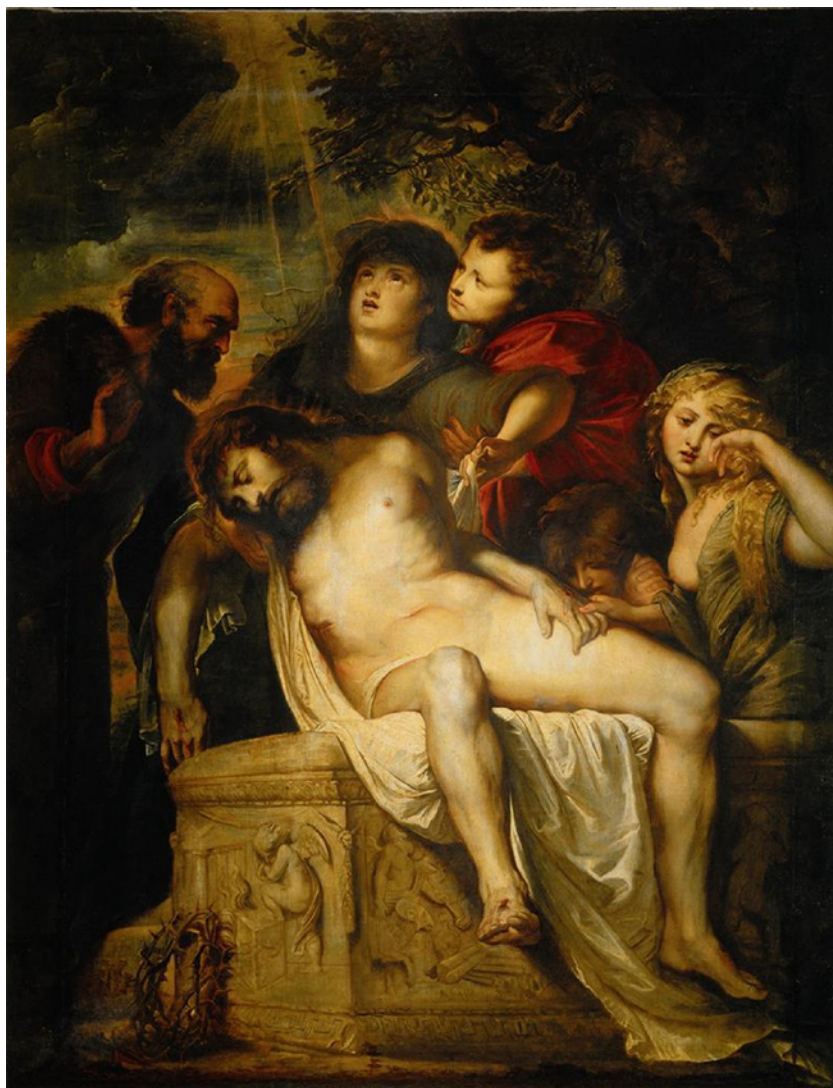


Fig. 2. Pieter Paul Rubens, *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (1602). Oil on wood, 180 × 136 cm. Rome, Galleria Borghese.

la mort de Léandre (New Haven) pour sa représentation du pathos. De fait, le cadre flou de cette *Lamentation* n'indique ni qu'il s'agit du moment où le Christ vient d'être descendu de croix – il n'y a pas de croix –, ni de sa toilette – il n'y a pas les objets nécessaires –, ni de sa mise au tombeau – il n'y a pas de tombe. La position du Christ semble indiquer qu'il se trouve sur la pierre d'onction, sans que celle-ci n'apparaisse. Le seul élément



Fig. 3. Pieter Paul Rubens, *The Lamentation of Christ* (ca. 1605). Oil on copper, 27,5 × 24 cm. Jacksonville, FL, Cummer Museum of Art.

anecdote est le linceul dont Jean recouvre le corps et qui annonce la mise au tombeau. L'essentiel ici n'est pas la narration. Rubens représente très précisément un modèle de méditation sur les plaies du Christ. Autour du Christ mort sont regroupés la Vierge, Jean, Marie-Madeleine, sans doute Joseph d'Arimatee et Nicodème et des saintes femmes. La Vierge Marie, penchée sur le visage de son fils, contemple les plaies faites par la couronne et semble vouloir baiser son visage, Marie-Madeleine embrasse les pieds tout en montrant leurs blessures, une sainte femme et un homme, Nicodème, sans doute, offrent à voir les plaies des mains,

tandis que la plaie au côté apparaît bien visible avant que le linceul ne recouvre le corps¹¹.

Rubens ne cessera de travailler à rendre de façon toujours plus efficace les scènes de lamentations, comme on le voit dans les tableaux qui suivent, que ce soit le petit format sans doute destiné à une dévotion privée, du Kunsthistorisches Museum de Vienne, la *Déposition du Christ*¹² (1614)¹³ [Fig. 5] ou qu'ils aient été conçus pour des autels, comme ceux du musée Getty, la *Mise au tombeau* (1612)¹⁴ [Fig. 6], de la collection Liechtenstein, la *Lamentation* (1613-1614)¹⁵ [Fig. 7] ou celui encore du Kunsthistorisches Museum de Vienne, la *Déposition du Christ (Lamentation de Marie et Jean sur le Christ mort)* (1614-1615)¹⁶ [Fig. 8]¹⁷. Le profond désespoir des figures disposées autour du corps du Christ mort, l'ostension de ce corps et de ses plaies par sa position sont les deux éléments auxquels Rubens apporte le plus grand soin. Souvent placé en oblique, livide, comme doit l'être un cadavre, le Christ est entouré toujours de sa mère et de saint Jean et, éventuellement, d'autres proches. Outre sa lividité, ses plaies sont montrées avec parfois une étonnante violence. Ainsi, le format presque carré du tableau du Getty [Fig. 6] met particulièrement bien en évidence le corps du Christ. La disposition du corps, étendu sur les trois quarts de la surface, suivant la diagonale, fait apparaître la plaie du côté, béante, sanglante, spectaculaire, pratiquement au centre du panneau. Dans le retable de la collection Liechtenstein [Fig. 7], ce sont les plantes des pieds percées des trous qu'ont fait les clous qui s'offrent d'abord au regard du spectateur.

¹¹ On peut s'interroger sur la destination de ce panneau. Est-ce une esquisse pour une plus large Lamentation qui n'aurait pas été réalisée ? Le support de cuivre rend, me semble-t-il, cette hypothèse peu vraisemblable. Je préfère y voir une image de méditation. Cette lamentation constitue sans doute la première expression des innovations que Rubens va apporter à l'iconographie de cette scène. Elle est très différente aussi du tableau de Berlin, la *Deposition*, 1610-1611, un autre petit format, 34,5 × 27,5 cm, peint sur toile, qui évoque la douleur des saintes femmes, sans cependant montrer les plaies du Christ, même si la lividité de son corps le désigne bien comme un cadavre. [Fig. 4].

¹² Je donne les titres comme ils apparaissent sur les catalogues des musées, sans les traduire, car certains musées, comme certains historiens de l'art, préfèrent parfois voir dans cette scène une « mise au tombeau » (c'est le cas pour le Getty). Je préfère désigner cette scène comme une lamentation. Il s'agit en effet d'un moment antérieur à la mise au tombeau, celui où, après la déposition, le Christ vient d'être porté pour la toilette mortuaire et qui est toujours associé à une lamentation.

¹³ 40,5 × 52,5 cm.

¹⁴ 131 × 130 cm.

¹⁵ 150 × 205 cm.

¹⁶ 107 × 115 cm.

¹⁷ Dans cette *Lamentation*, comme dans la *Lamentation* de Vienne, Rubens ajoute un détail pathétique: la Vierge penchée sur le cadavre de son fils, ferme délicatement son œil, dans le tableau de la collection Liechtenstein. Dans celui de Vienne, elle ôte de ses cheveux une épine.



Fig. 4. Pieter Paul Rubens, *The Deposition of Christ* (1610-1611). Oil on wood, 34 × 27.4 cm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie.

Après avoir ému le spectateur par le pathétique de la scène, Rubens organise la lecture du tableau qui se déroule elle-même en plusieurs étapes.

Le triptyque Michielsen présente trois panneaux et le spectateur est conduit à chercher ce qui justifie la présence des deux scènes peintes sur les volets ouverts qui encadrent la lamentation. Ils étonnent dans un premier temps. À gauche, une gracieuse et sereine Vierge contemple son bel Enfant qu'elle aide à se tenir debout. À droite, saint Jean, l'Évangile à la



Fig. 5. Pieter Paul Rubens, *The Deposition of Christ* (1614). Oil on wood, 40.5 × 52.5 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

main, la tête tournée, regarde un aigle qui descend vers lui, occupant près du tiers supérieur du panneau. Il est aussi remarquable, cependant, que la disposition de ces deux figures – la Vierge à l'Enfant, placée à gauche, et saint Jean, à droite – permet de construire une narration, selon une lecture de gauche à droite. L'Enfant Jésus regarde en effet sur sa droite la scène centrale où il est le Christ mort, tandis que le regard de saint Jean se porte aussi vers la droite, vers l'aigle. La Vierge à l'Enfant évoque évidemment le début de la vie terrestre de Jésus, en même temps que l'incarnation, au centre, la mise au tombeau marque l'accomplissement de cette vie terrestre et saint Jean, à droite, qui tient dans ses mains l'Évangile futur, renvoie au futur christianisme, l'aigle évoquant traditionnellement la foi et l'immortalité¹⁸. L'emploi des couleurs, tout aussi remarquable, est un autre fil conducteur. Le rouge dont est vêtue la Vierge dans le volet

¹⁸ Cf. *Isaïe* 40:31: 'Ceux qui espèrent dans le Seigneur renouvelleront leur force, ils déploieront leurs ailes comme des aigles, ils courront sans s'épuiser, ils marcheront sans se fatiguer' ('Qui autem sperant in Domino mutabunt fortitudinem adsument pinnas sicut aquilae current et non laborabunt ambulabunt et non deficient').



Fig. 6. Pieter Paul Rubens, *The Entombment* (1612). Oil on wood, 131 × 130 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum.

de gauche reparaît, plus discrètement, sur sa manche dans le panneau central et revient, éclatant, vêtir saint Jean.

La continuité est encore soulignée par plusieurs détails qui se font écho d'un panneau à l'autre, tout en ayant leur raison d'être dans chaque scène. Sur le panneau à gauche du spectateur, l'enfant Jésus est tenu debout, par Marie, sur une pierre qui annonce, on l'a déjà remarqué¹⁹, la pierre d'onction sur laquelle gît le Christ dans le panneau central. La pierre d'onction est, de surcroît, couverte de paille. Cette paille a suscité de nombreux commentaires. Leo Wuyts a montré qu'elle renvoie au rituel

¹⁹ En particulier, Jacobs, « Rubens and the Northern Past » 312.



Fig. 7. Pieter Paul Rubens, *The Lamentation* (1613-14). Oil on wood, 151 × 204 cm. Vienna, Liechtenstein Museum.

d'ensevelissement flamand médiéval. Il n'en est pas moins vrai que cette paille connote plusieurs sens²⁰. Elle rappelle la crèche où naquit l'Enfant, en même temps qu'elle fait référence à l'Eucharistie. Sa présence au sein du panneau central renvoie donc au volet de gauche (le Christ enfant), comme à celui de droite (la messe chrétienne célébrée par l'Évangile).

Cette première lecture était accessible à tout dévot, même s'il n'était pas un fin théologien, la clarté avec laquelle Rubens le guide contribuant à éclairer le sens du triptyque.

Nous n'avons pas encore évoqué un élément extérieur à l'épitaque et qui était alors à la disposition du spectateur, l'inscription, aujourd'hui disparue, qui accompagnait le triptyque. Elle nous a été conservée par une copie manuscrite²¹. Regardait-on le triptyque avant de lire l'inscription

²⁰ C'est ce qu'explique Wuyts, « Bij de iconographie van twee Rubensschilderijen » 68-70. Mais je suis Huvenne, « Épitaphe de Jan Michielsens et Maria Maes » 183, et Jacobs, « Rubens and the Northern Past » 320, note 11, quand ils écrivent que cette réalité n'exclut pas l'explication eucharistique.

²¹ Rooses M., *L'œuvre de P. P. Rubens: Histoire et description de ses tableaux et dessins*, 5 vols. (Anvers: 1886-1892; éd. réimprimée, Soest: 1977) II 142. L'inscription, transcrite par F. Mols, est conservée à la Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles sous la cote MS 5726.

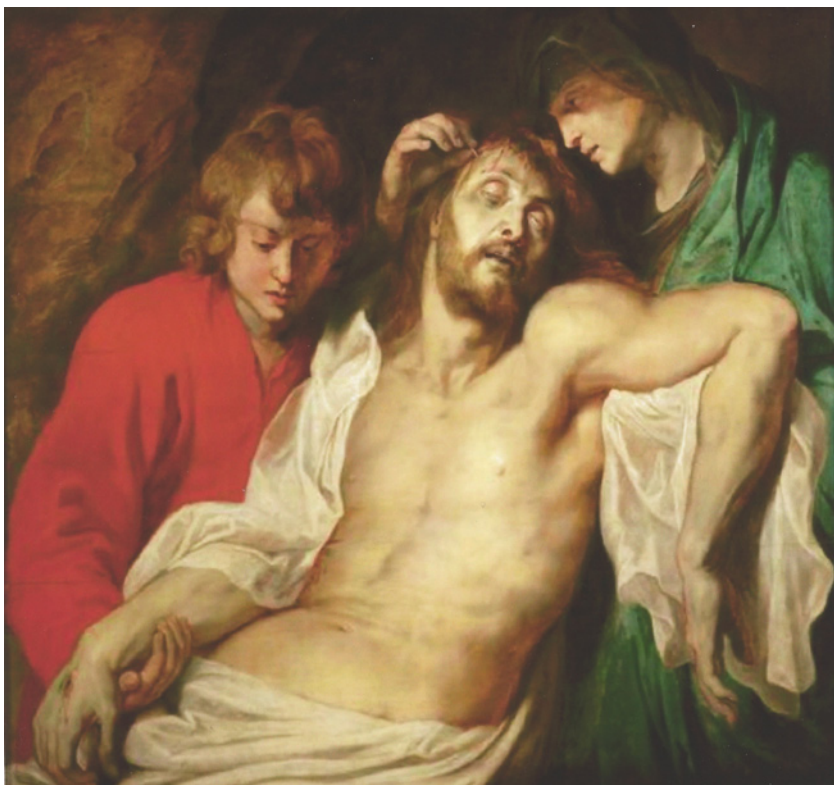


Fig. 8. Pieter Paul Rubens, *The Deposition of Christ* (1614-1615). Oil on wood, 107.5 × 115.5 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

placée au-dessous ou lisait-on celle-ci avant de regarder le triptyque ? Les deux cas de figure devaient assurément se présenter, bien qu'il soit plus vraisemblable que l'on ait regardé le triptyque qui « appelle » si vivement le regard avant de lire une inscription de format plus petit. En tout cas, la lecture de cette inscription ne devait pas manquer d'inciter le spectateur à revenir au triptyque. Que lui disait-elle²² ?

Deo Opt. Max. Sacr.
 Jacet hocce non jacet sepulchro
 conditum non conditum
 JOANNIS instar quod fuit MICHILSII
 nam lege fati seculo demortuus non conjugii

²² Je reproduis le texte que donne Wuyts, « Christus op het stro » 18.

MARIÆ pudicæ mente vultu MASIÆ²³
 Cujus sibi superstes ipse vivit in præcordiis
 spiratq. vivus in quaterno pignore.
 Requiem sito viator apprecare perpetem
 longos superstiti dies xynoridi
 Obiit A° M:DC:XVII:XX: Junii.

Je propose cette traduction, la plus fidèle possible au texte auquel je n'ajoute que la ponctuation:

Consacré à Dieu très grand très bon.
 Gît, ne gît pas, dans cette tombe,
 Enseveli, non enseveli,
 À l'instar de Jean, ce que fut Michielsens.
 Car, par la loi du destin, mort pour le siècle, non pour sa femme,
 Marie Maes à la contenance et à l'esprit pudique
 Dans le cœur de laquelle lui-même vit, survivant à lui-même,
 Et respire, vivant en quatre enfants.
 Passant, prie pour le repos éternel de celui qui repose,
 Pour de longs jours pour l'épouse survivante.
 Il mourut le 20 juin de l'année 1617.

L'inscription explique d'abord la présence de Marie et de Jean peints sur les faces intérieures des deux volets: ce sont les saints patrons de la commanditaire, Maria Maes, et de son défunt mari, Jan Michielsens, qui se substituent aux traditionnels portraits tels que ceux que Rubens avait peints sur les volets de l'építaphe de Rockocx. Si le sens général est clair – le défunt survit dans le cœur de sa femme et par sa descendance –, cette inscription contient des éléments quelque peu énigmatiques. Écrite en latin, elle ne s'adresse qu'à un lecteur cultivé. Ce latin serait anodin, puisque les inscriptions étaient alors le plus souvent écrites dans cette langue, si l'inscription ne comportait un mot, 'xynoridi'²⁴, qui n'est pas latin, mais qui est un mot grec transcrit en caractères latins. Cette inscription pose donc, au passage, la question de la culture de la commanditaire ou de sa famille. Mais cela est une question qui dépasse notre propos. Enfin, cette inscription se présente parfois comme une énigme – 'Gît, ne gît pas, dans

²³ Il n'y a pas lieu de corriger 'Masia' en 'Maria', comme l'écrit Jacobs, « Rubens and the Northern Past » 313, qui traduit 'his wife Maria, chaste in mind with the countenance of Masia' ('« Masia » no doubt was intended to be « Maria, » that is, the Virgin Mary') et note 79. Masia est la latinisation du nom de famille Maes (cf. l'hébraïste André Maes qui signe du nom latinisé Andreas Masius). De la même façon que le prénom et le nom de Jan Michielsens encadrent le vers 3, ceux de sa femme encadrent le vers 5.

²⁴ Je remercie Gilbert Tournoy (K.U.L.) de ses indications.

cette tombe, enseveli, non enseveli'. C'est l'indication 'Joannis instar' – 'à l'instar de Jean' – qui donne la clef de cette énigme, à qui connaît du moins la tradition johannique. Paul Huvenne, après Colin Eisler²⁵, rappelle en effet qu'une ancienne interprétation de l'*Évangile de Jean* 21:22-23 voulait que Jean ne fût pas mort, mais endormi dans son tombeau. Cependant, il ne s'agit pas d'une interprétation populaire de l'Évangile, comme l'écrivent ces auteurs, mais d'un point débattu par les Pères de l'Église. Saint Augustin, en particulier, dans le 124^e *Traité sur l'Évangile de Jean*, commente ainsi ces versets de Jean:

[...] on croit – en s'appuyant sur ces paroles où le Seigneur dit: 'Je veux qu'il demeure ainsi jusqu'à ce que je vienne' – que Jean, vivant, dort sous la terre. Certains disent même (on le trouve dans certaines écritures, quoique apocryphes) que, quand il ordonna qu'on préparât sa tombe, il était présent, en parfaite santé, et, qu'une fois sa tombe creusée et très soigneusement préparée, il s'y installa comme dans un lit, et mourut aussitôt. Or, ceux qui comprennent ainsi les paroles du Seigneur pensent qu'il s'est étendu sans être mort, mais en ressemblant à un mort, que, comme on le croyait mort, on l'ensevelit endormi et que, jusqu'à la venue du Christ, il demeurera ainsi²⁶.

Saint Jean est ensuite associé par Augustin à une méditation sur la vie éternelle qu'il conclut en ces termes (124, 5): 'que Jean soit aimé de lui, afin que nous soyons toujours en possession de l'immortalité future' ('ametur ab eo Iohannes, ut in illa immortalitate seruemur').

L'inscription nous conduit donc à examiner à nouveau le triptyque en partant de la figure de saint Jean, ainsi que celle de Marie, l'un et l'autre apparaissant d'ailleurs à deux reprises, quand le triptyque est ouvert, une fois, séparés, sur chaque panneau latéral, une seconde fois, ensemble, sur le panneau central.

Sur le panneau central, la façon même dont la Vierge tient le linceul dont elle va couvrir le visage de son Fils mort renvoie, ainsi que Paul Huvenne le rappelle²⁷, au geste qu'elle fait dans les *Adorations* pour

²⁵ Huvenne, « Épitaphe de Jan Michielsen et Maria Maes » 183; Eisler, « Rubens' Uses of the Northern Past » 59.

²⁶ Augustin Aurèle, Saint, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 124, 2: '[...] Iohannes ex istorum occasione uerborum ubi dominus ait: sic eum uolo manere donec uenio, creditur uiuus dormire sub terra. Quem tradunt etiam (quod in quibusdam scripturis quamuis apocryphis reperitur), quando sibi fieri iussit sepulcrum, incolumem fuisse praesentem, eoque effosso et diligentissime praeparato, ibi se tamquam in lectulo collocasse, statimque eum esse defunctum; ut autem isti putant, qui haec uerba domini sic intellegunt, non defunctum, sed defuncto similem cubuisse, et cum mortuus putaretur, sepultum fuisse dormientem, et donec Christus ueniat sic manere [...].'

²⁷ Huvenne, « Épitaphe de Jan Michielsen et Maria Maes » 186.

dévoiler aux bergers ou aux mages le Fils de Dieu fait homme, mais aussi à l'eucharistie, quand le prêtre montre aux fidèles l'hostie consacrée, c'est-à-dire le corps du Christ. Le lien avec le volet gauche est donc redoublé: le linge, ou plus précisément, le linge sur lequel se tient l'Enfant annonçant le linceul, comme le linceul renvoie au linge. La pierre d'onction, sur laquelle le Christ repose, trouve sa préfiguration dans la pierre sur laquelle marche Jésus. La présence du blé aux épis bien visibles devant la pierre d'onction prend aussi tout son sens, de même que celle de Jean, le disciple bien aimé, assis aux côtés de Jésus lors de l'institution de l'eucharistie. Au-delà de la mort terrestre du Christ, la résurrection, répétée dans l'eucharistie, offre au fidèle l'espoir de la rédemption. Le regard de Marie est à cet égard signifiant. Si la jeune mère du volet gauche regardait avec tendresse son bel enfant, se détournant du panneau central, comme si elle ignorait le sort auquel il est destiné, la *mater dolorosa* a les yeux tournés vers le Ciel. C'est à Dieu, aussi bien qu'au fidèle, qu'elle semble montrer le corps douloureux de son Fils mort pour racheter le péché des hommes, assumant ainsi son rôle de médiatrice affirmé par le Concile de Trente. Mère en qui Dieu s'est incarné, médiatrice entre Dieu et les hommes, elle participe de leur rédemption.

La présence de Jean auprès de la Vierge rappelle sa présence au pied de la croix quand Jésus confie sa mère à son disciple préféré²⁸, celui qui était à ses côtés lors de l'institution de l'Eucharistie. Sur le panneau droit, saint Jean montre à l'aigle l'Évangile qu'il tient dans la main et qui témoigne, entre tous, de la venue et de l'incarnation du Verbe. On se rappelle les premiers versets de Jean 1:1 : 'Au commencement était le Verbe, et le Verbe était en Dieu, et le Verbe était Dieu [...] 14: Et le Verbe s'est fait chair, et il a habité parmi nous ('In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum [...] et verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis'). Jean a aussi été le témoin de la mort du Christ. L'aigle, symbole de Jean, est aussi celui de la Résurrection: Jean sera le témoin de la tombe vide (*Jean* 20:2), ainsi que de la présence du Ressuscité sur le lac de Tibériade (*Jean* 21:7).

Enfin, on n'a pas encore relevé, à ma connaissance, un détail qui vient confirmer le type de lecture exégétique mis en place par Rubens dans ce triptyque. La pierre sur laquelle se tient l'Enfant Jésus est couverte de deux linges. La présence du linge sur lequel est placé son pied gauche,

²⁸ *Jean* 19:26 : 'Cum vidisset ergo Iesus matrem et discipulum stantem quem diligebat dicit matri suae mulier ecce filius tuus. 27. Deinde dicit discipulo ecce mater tua et ex illa hora accepit eam discipulus in sua'.

dont nous avons rappelé plus haut une fonction, a souvent été commémorée. Mais le second linge n'a pas retenu l'attention. Or, Rubens le distingue très clairement de l'autre. Le premier linge est totalement blanc, d'un blanc éclatant, et ourlé (un trait appuyé souligne l'ourlé). Le second est écru, frangé et rayé de bleu foncé dans sa partie inférieure. Ce linge rayé de bleu et frangé est un talit, le châle dont les Israélites s'enveloppent pour la prière du matin, fait de laine (d'où sa couleur) et fini de franges (les *Tsisits*). Chacun des pieds de l'Enfant repose sur un de ces linges qui symbolisent le premier, l'Ancienne Alliance – et le pied qui le foule est en retrait par rapport à l'autre –, le second, la Nouvelle Alliance.

Les significations qu'induit la présence de ces deux linges, dans le cadre de ce triptyque, sont triples et complètent les premiers sens trouvés. D'abord, ce châle doit être associé au verset des *Nombres* 15:39, où Dieu en prescrit le port aux Israélites: 'Lorsque vous regarderez les franges, vous vous souviendrez de tous les commandements du Seigneur, et vous ne suivrez pas les désirs de vos cœurs et de vos yeux pour vous laisser entraîner à la prostitution²⁹.' Les franges du talit sont les commandements, la volonté de Dieu. L'Enfant obéira à la loi du Père – ce que nous disait son regard tourné vers la scène centrale – et cela renforce l'annonce du linceul par le lange. Ensuite, au talit, qui rappelle la loi de l'Ancien Testament, succède, dans l'ordre des temps, le livre ouvert, l'Évangile de Jean. Enfin, c'est Jean, encore, qui donne son sens ultime à cette juxtaposition des deux linges. En 1:17, il écrit: 'Car la Loi a été donnée par Moïse; la grâce et la vérité sont venues par Jésus-Christ' ('Quia lex per Mosen data est, gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est'). La loi mosaïque, symbolisée par le talit, est dépassée par la grâce divine.

Sur l'extérieur des volets – des grisailles exécutées par l'atelier –, sont peints une Vierge à l'Enfant et un Christ *Salvator Mundi* (sauveur du monde). Le triptyque refermé offre ainsi une sorte de résumé de l'histoire racontée lorsqu'il est ouvert, histoire qui met en scène l'Enfant Jésus et le Christ Sauveur, l'Incarnation et la Rédemption³⁰.

Conforme aux prescriptions post-tridentines par la clarté de sa narration et son emploi du pathos, ce triptyque incite le spectateur à aller au-delà de cette narration et à approfondir sa 'lecture' du tableau. Il ne s'agit pas

²⁹ *Nombres* 15:39: 'Quas cum viderint recordentur omnium mandatorum Domini nec sequantur cogitationes suas et oculos per res varias fornicantes'.

³⁰ On notera d'ailleurs la disposition en chiasme qui organise la lecture. La Vierge, à gauche quand le retable est ouvert, est à droite quand il est fermé, le Christ *Salvator mundi* répond à saint Jean.

pour Rubens d'illustrer un texte (qui d'ailleurs n'existe pas dans les *Évangiles*), mais, en suivant une démarche typologique, d'inciter le spectateur à méditer sur les sens de la Passion du Christ. Incarnation, résurrection, rédemption, eucharistie, grâce: ce triptyque réunit tous ces éléments dans une véritable catéchèse. Il illustre la foi dans la rédemption et la résurrection en rappelant que le Christ s'est incarné pour sauver le pécheur et en soulignant le rôle de la Vierge. Il convient donc parfaitement à une épitaphe.

Sans cesse ramené du détail à l'ensemble, puis de l'ensemble au détail, le spectateur est progressivement conduit à une exégèse qui va du sens littéral au sens anagogique. Cette progression permet au plus simple de comprendre 'l'histoire' de la Passion – de l'incarnation au discours évangélique. Les plus érudits peuvent décrypter les sens allégoriques et anagogiques à la lumière de détails signifiants, comme le talit ou le blé, et de leur connaissance des textes qui leur permettent de trouver, au-delà de la discontinuité narrative, l'unité sémantique du triptyque.

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A NEW INTERPRETATION OF VERMEER'S *ALLEGORY OF FAITH*:
VIVIDNESS AND FIGURAL INTERPRETATION¹

Caroline van Eck

Among the many enigmatic paintings by Johannes Vermeer the *Allegory of Faith* stands out because Christian symbols intrude into a Dutch seventeenth-century interior [Fig. 1]. Over the years many commentators have felt uncomfortable with this painting, in particular with the 'indecent' pose of the woman, or simply because it does not tally with the standard view of Vermeer women as mysterious, elusive, self-contained, whole, and nurturing. But it also presents the viewer with a paradox. It is a Catholic painting, often called an allegory, and as such its purpose is to persuade the spectator of the truth of the faith. But it eludes easy interpretation. Sometimes this has been diagnosed as the intrusion of allegory, in the form of the snake crushed by a stone and the globe of the heavens, into a scene of everyday life. In itself this is not a problem, as it occurs very frequently in Western religious painting, and usually without troubling us. But other features of the work also subvert or ignore the usual way in which such paintings address the viewer. The woman, who is the main figure in the painting, ignores what is happening in front of her, and instead gazes at the globe suspended from the ceiling. The viewer is not addressed by anybody except the unnamed mourner at the foot of the Cross.

Also, the *Allegory of Faith* is singularly self-reflexive. It draws attention to its nature as a painting by means of the contrasting ways in which the curtain and the scene it reveals are painted: whereas the main scene is painted with fine brush strokes, the curtain is done with rough brush work, which both represents the structure of the cloth of the curtain, and draws attention to the painter's work. It is also a painting of a painting (Jordaens' *Crucifixion*), and contains a great number of representational objects. The curtain, carpet, globe, painting of the Crucifixion, chalice, gold leather wall-covering, globe, and crucifix on the table all are, or contain, figural or pictorial representations. Finally, it does not suggest a common

¹ I am very grateful to Ivan Gaskell, Elizabeth Honig, and Antien Knaap for their comments and suggestions, and to the Dutch Foundation of Scientific Research (NWO) for generously supporting the research on which this essay is based.



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 5] Johannes Vermeer, *Allegory of the Christian Faith* (ca. 1670–72). Oil on canvas, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Friedman Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedman, 1931. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ground between painting and viewer – the first condition of persuasion – because in spite of the clarity and unambiguous structure of the space and the position of objects in it (unlike for instance *The Woman at the Virginal*), there is very little continuity between the space of the viewer and pictorial space. The reflecting globe shows the studio of the painter, which suggests that what we see is what the painter saw or visualized. That this is a revelation of a scene envisaged by somebody else, and not normally accessible as part of the everyday world is also suggested by the theatrical gesture of the curtain drawn aside at left. For a scene from everyday life this painting is too crowded with a range of allegorical objects and motifs. For an emblem or allegory it is too vivid, too lifelike, and too private: it looks like an image the painter saw or staged.

1. *The Allegory of Faith*

The curtain at left is pulled back at its base. On it a church spire, a running man, and a horse with rider are discernible, together with a pattern of fruits and flowers. The curtain seems more strongly lit than the scene it reveals. Behind stands a chair with a blue pillow on the seat. Between the chair and the dais on which a woman sits, a snake lies on the tiled floor, crushed by a block of stone, blood running from its open mouth towards the viewer. Near the platform lies an apple. The woman sits with legs apart, one sandaled foot resting on a globe. She holds one hand to her bosom; with the other arm she leans on the table. She is dressed in white and blue silk or satin with golden trimmings, and wears pearls and considerable décolletage. This formal attire contrasts with her bare feet in sandals or slippers. The platform is covered with green tapestry in a floral pattern. The table is laid with a blue cloth; on it are a piece of green silk, a chalice of gold and silver, an ebony crucifix with a golden statue of Christ, a greenish/blueish crown of thorns, and an open book, which could be a missal or the bible. Behind the table is what looks like part of a screen of gold leather wall covering with an arabesque pattern. Behind the woman is a painting of the Crucifixion, with St. John the Evangelist standing on the right hand of the viewer, pointing towards Christ and looking out of the painting with downcast eyes, over his left shoulder. To the left is a woman clad in black, presumably the Virgin Mary. Behind her is a seated figure, looking mournfully out of the painting, with its head resting on its left hand; another figure rests its head in the lap of this figure. Between the viewer and the seated woman a reflecting globe is suspended from the

ceiling. On the side visible to the viewer, some dark, light, and red patches are visible.

The overall first impression is that of a contrast between the strong pictorial character and materiality of the way the curtain is painted, drawing attention to the texture of the depicted cloth but also to the strokes of paint itself, and the strong representational character of the scene the curtain reveals. Like many other works by Vermeer, the *Allegory of Faith* is not only a pictorial representation of objects and persons in a certain situation, but also a painting of a painting (in this case Jordaens' *Crucifixion*), and one that draws attention to being a painting by a painter, because the reflecting globe reflects the painter's studio (as does the mirror in *The Interrupted Music Lesson*).²

The perspectival scheme followed here is the same as the one used in *The Allegory of Painting*: the vanishing point is slightly to the left of the left side of the picture frame; the horizon line passes through the feet of Christ on the Cross in the painting and the left elbow of the woman seated in front of it. The visual angle is about 30 degrees.

With the exception of the unnamed figure between Mary and the Cross in the painting, nobody looks directly at the viewer: in both images Christ averts His face, Mary looks at her Son, the seated woman probably looks at the reflecting globe, and Saint John the Evangelist, even though he makes a mediating gesture between the Cross and the viewers of this painted Crucifixion, looks with downcast eyes out of the frame to his left.

2. Existing Interpretations

The standard reaction to this somewhat understudied painting has been to look for an iconographical or contextual interpretation, presenting parallels and possible models from emblem books such as Ripa's, or books explaining the Roman Catholic Mass.³ Eddy de Jongh, following Dirk Bar-

² Vadam J., "Vermeer in perspectief", in Broos B. – Wheelock A.K. Jr. (eds.), *Johannes Vermeer* (Zwolle: 1995) 67–70.

³ Recent studies include Swillens P.T.A., *Johannes Vermeer; Painter of Delft 1632–75* (Utrecht – Brussels: 1950); Jongh E. de, "Pearls of Virtue and Pearls of Vice", *Simiolus* 8 (1975–1976) 69–97; Berger H. Jr., *Second World and Green World: Studies in Renaissance Fiction-Making* (Berkeley: 1988); Arasse D., *L'ambition de Vermeer* (Paris: 1993) 163–178; Broos – Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer 190–195*; Hertel C., *Vermeer: Reception and Interpretation* (Cambridge – New York: 1996) 205–229; Arasse D., "Vermeer's Private Allegories", in Gaskell I. – Jonker M. (eds.), *Vermeer Studies* (New Haven – London: 1998) 225–233;

nouw, has interpreted it as an allegory or emblem of Catholic Faith or theology, drawing on some similarities to the emblems in Ripa and Willem Hesius' *Emblemata sacra de fide, spe, charitate* of 1636.⁴ Broos and Wheelock stress the Jesuit connection.⁵ Hedquist has recently argued that we should interpret this painting as an allegory of the Eucharist and the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The woman at the table represents Mary Magdalene, one of the great mediators between Christ and man.⁶ Arasse has drawn attention to the suspended globe's reflection of the painter's studio, and has compared the absent painter to the Christian God, who is also absent from his creation. He has also drawn attention to contemporary views, for instance by Gerard de Lairese, that the mind of the painter is like a globe that reflects the entire world.⁷

One problem with many of these interpretations, for all the revelations they offer, is that they stress the similarities, but ignore the differences between these contextual sources and *The Allegory of Painting*, in particular the fact that none of these mentions the combination of a woman seated at the altar, which seems to preclude any interpretation of the painting as a representation of the Eucharist. If they mention Mary Magdalene, she is not seated at the altar, but prostrate, or weeping at the foot of the Cross.⁸ Contemporary sources, such as Gerard de Lairese's *Groot Schilder-boeck*, stress that allegories or emblems ('zinnebeelden'), should be unequivocal and balanced.⁹ More serious is the static and textual character of these interpretations: they focus on individual elements and their extra-pictorial contextual meaning, but do not succeed in

Hedquist V., "The Real Presence of Christ and the Penitent Mary Magdalene in *The Allegory of Faith* by Vermeer", *Art History* 23 (2000), 333–364; Liedtke W., "Vermeer, *Allegory of the Faith*", in Liedtke W. – Plomp M.C. – Rüger A. (eds.), *Vermeer and the Delft School* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery, London] (New Haven – London: 2001) 399–402; and Hedquist V., "Religion in the Art and Life of Vermeer", in Franits W.E., *The Cambridge Companion to Vermeer* (Cambridge – New York: 2001) 111–131. Barnouw A.J., "Vermeers zoogenaamd 'Novum Testamentum'", *Oud-Holland* 32 (1914) 49–54, continues to set the tenor for the majority of recent iconographical interpretations.

⁴ De Jongh, "Pearls of Virtue and Pearls of Vice". Cf. Barnouw, "Vermeers zoogenaamd 'Novum Testamentum'".

⁵ Broos – Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer* 190–194.

⁶ See Hedquist, "Religion in the Art and Life of Vermeer" 126, and "The Real Presence of Christ" 333–364.

⁷ Arasse, *L'ambition de Vermeer* 163–178, and "Vermeer's Private Allegories" 341–349, in particular note 12.

⁸ See, for example, David Jan, *Cruyt-hof der Kerck-Ceremonien* (Antwerp, Jan Cnobbaert: 1622) 90.

⁹ Lairese Gerard de, *Groot Schilder-boeck* (Amsterdam, Erfgenamen van Willem de Coup: 1707) 118.

explaining what happens in the painting as a whole. Such readings ignore the actual experience of looking at the painting and its emotional impact. Iconography tends to assume that the iconographical attitude is the spectator's only response. But as Ivan Gaskell recently observed: 'Experience of its image component alone [...] is not to be confounded with experience of the painting as a meaningful object'.¹⁰ Nor is the viewer's experience of him- or herself looking at the painting to be reduced to a decipherment of iconographical meaning.

Iconographical interpretation is also obstructed here by the indeterminacy of Vermeer's supposed allegory, what Daniel Arasse, following Roger de Piles, called the private character of Vermeer's allegories: its composition does not fit in with standard emblems or allegories; it is too idiosyncratic, too much of a unique case, and – unlike emblematic or allegorical images – it does not offer a clear statement of the limits of interpretation.¹¹ Yet I would suggest that visibility is not so much a historical phenomenon, a topic or subject to be studied, but rather a heuristic tool, an instrument of interpretation, which helps us to address a series of aspects of painting that remain unaddressed in other approaches. This does not mean that visibility cannot be historicized; in fact, what I propose to do here is to develop the notion of visibility by looking at two contemporary sources or settings in which it is used and theorized: rhetoric and religion.

In the last few decades, since the introduction of visibility and visual culture in the study of Dutch modern art by Svetlana Alpers and others, visibility has been studied mainly in the context of science: of the revolutionary developments in optical science, and their repercussions for the production and reception of art. But visibility should be studied within the context of religion as well, because religion was one of the determining factors in the way people thought about, and looked at, the world around them, art, life, and themselves. It supplied many of the competencies and concepts used when looking at art. Considering the religious context of visibility ties in with the ways in which works of art were viewed in a culture dominated to a large extent by religious concerns. Religion is an obvious context because this is a religious painting; but I would argue that rhetoric is an equally obvious source because religious paintings were not made for the sake of art, but to move the beholder, persuade him or her to

¹⁰ Gaskell, *Vermeer Studies* 226.

¹¹ Arasse, "Vermeer's Private Allegories".

take a particular course of action. Seventeenth-century religious paintings such as *The Allegory of Faith* were made in a society in which all public expression, including painting, was steeped in rhetoric. Also, rhetoric has a lot to say, not only about the means of verbal persuasion, but about visual persuasion as well.

3. *Vividness and Visual Persuasion*

The Allegory of Faith is a religious painting. It is also a Catholic painting. The *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* of Gabriele Paleotti, first published in 1582, may be considered as the most influential and widespread statement of the views of the Catholic Church on the nature and function of religious images.¹² Paleotti clearly stated that the aim of sacred images is to delight, instruct, and move their viewers, and thereby to persuade them of the truth of the Catholic Faith, to impress on them the bravery, constancy, endurance, charity, and faith of the Catholic martyrs, and thus to influence the will, convictions, and actions of the spectators. In this view, religious images are remarkably similar to sacred orators. In the Low Countries, similar views were for instance stated by the Antwerp Jesuit Johannes David in his discussion of the rightful use of sacred images and by Herman Hugo in his *Pia Desideria*.¹³ In 1707, Gerard de Lairese also stressed the persuasive role of painting as sacred oratory in his chapter on representations of the Trinity. The painter, like the orator, has to take recourse to figural speech and the use of simile in order to seize upon the minds and hearts of the public:

Is it not the case that a painted scene [...] incites to learning just as well as a well-ordered discourse, in which the orator, in order to make himself understood, is forced to take recourse to a figural manner of speaking in comparisons? Or as a text, in which one finds the same manner of making oneself understood? Truly, yes: for the purpose of both [speech and text] is

¹² On Paleotti, see Jones P.M., "Art Theory as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Religion", in Farago C. (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance. Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650* (New Haven – London: 1995) 127–140. The standard modern edition of Paleotti is Barocchi P., *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, 3 vols. (Bari: 1961) II 117–509, in particular, 199, 209–228.

¹³ David Jan, *Bloem-hof der Kerck-Ceremonien* (Antwerp, Jan Cnobbaert: 1622) 33; Hugo Herman, *Pia Desideria emblematis elegiis & affectibus SS. Patrum illustrata* (Antwerp, H. Aertsens: 1624), *passim*.

that their arguments should seize upon the minds of their audience. Yes, doesn't the bare text, in which the matter is contained, consist of letter-images ('letterbeelden'), which we grasp through a certain manner of understanding? For it is not the matter itself.¹⁴

Paleotti is rather more silent about the ways and means by which these aims are to be achieved: the techniques and strategies of visual representation by means of which visual persuasion is effected. In that respect, Andrea Pozzo, the Jesuit author of the *Prospettiva dei pittori* of 1697, one of the most widely-read manuals on perspective, is more explicit: he clearly states that the use of linear perspective is a rhetorical strategy, used to move the soul of the beholder towards the true vanishing point, that is, the glory of God: 'Therefore, Reader, my advice is that you cheerfully begin your work, with a resolution to draw all the points thereof to that true Point, the glory of God [...]'.¹⁵

¹⁴ De Lairese, "Onderzoek wegens het verbeelden van de Personen der H. Drieëenheid", in *Groot Schilder-boeck* 163: 'Is niet [...] een geschilderd Tafereel zo wel tot leerzaamheid strekkende, als een welgeschikt Vertoog, in 't welk de Redenaar, om zich te doen verstaan, genoodzaakt is zijne toevlucht te nemen tot een figuurlijke wijze van spreken door gelijkenissen? Of als een schrift, daar men de zelve manier van zich te doen verstaan in vind? Waarlijk ja: want het doelwit der twee laatsten is hunne redenen voor het begrip der behoorden op derzelve gemoed te doen klem hebben. Ja het bloote schrift, waar in de zaak vervat is, bestaat dat niet altemaal in letterbeelden, die wij, door een zekere wijze van verstaan, begrijpen? Het is immers de zaak zelve niet'. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the author.

¹⁵ Pozzo Andrea, "To the Lovers of Perspective", in *Rules and Examples of Perspective for Painters and Architects* [...]. In English and Latin. Containing a most easie and expeditious Method to Delineate in Perspective All Designs relating to Architecture, after a New Manner, Wholly free from the Confusion of Occult Lines: by that Great Master thereof, Andrea Pozzo, Soc. Jes., engraven [...] by John Sturt, done into English from the Original printed in Rome 1693 in Latin and Italian, by Mr John James of Greenwich (London, Benjamin Motte: 1707) n.p. [11]: 'The Art of Perspective does, with wonderful Pleasure, deceive the Eye, the most subtle of all our Outward Senses; and is very essential to be known of all, who in Painting would give a due Place and Propriety to their Figures, and more or less Strength required to the Lights and Shades of the Picture. This might be insensibly attain'd, if Persons, not content with the Study of Drawing Only, would accustom themselves exactly to delineate the several Orders of Architecture [...]. Therefore, Reader, my Advice is, that you cheerfully begin your Work, with a Resolution to draw all the Points thereof to that true Point, the Glory of God ('al vero punto dell'occhio che è la Gloria Divina') [...]. Cf. Lione Pascoli's "Life of Pozzo" in volume 2 of his *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti moderni* (Rome, Antonio de' Rossi: 1736) 192: 'Piu prodigiosa pero di tutti mi pare la prospettiva, la quale ingannando a suo piacere la vista ci tira a vedere qual che non e, e fa cadere su' nostri sensi cioche poscia veduto, o da piu vicino, o da piu diverso punto non trova'. With reference to rhetoric, Pascoli states: 'all'energia dell'eloquenza che si gloria di trarre il cuore dell'uomo ovunque vole, e di muovere lo al suo arbitrio all'ira, al diletto, allo sdegno, e all'amore'.

Beauty is a great persuader in Paleotti's view, and so is lifelikeness or vividness. This also becomes clear when we look at that other major theory of Catholic sacred visuality, Ignatius of Loyola's *Exercitia Spiritualia* or *Spiritual Exercises*. These are instructions on how to meditate, or contemplate, the life and Passion of Christ in order to become a true believer. Meditation has a very clear persuasive function. The medium of persuasion is lifelikeness or vividness. The believer is relentlessly instructed to compose – note the use of the Albertian term – in the mind's eye very detailed and protracted visualisations of the setting, scenery, and actions of Christ.¹⁶ Becoming persuaded of the truths of the Catholic Faith is in fact very similar to becoming a painter, as is shown for instance by the South-Netherlandish devotional treatise *Veridicus Christianus* by Iohannes David, published in 1601 by Plantin in Antwerp [Fig. 2]. What the painters paint is not what they see actually happening in front of them, but other episodes from the Passion of Christ: these painters are not real painters after life, but believers, who paint with the eye of the imagination the contemplative subjects they visualize.

Vividness or *enargeia*, one of the most important instruments in rhetoric and painting, is utilized to engage the attention of the public, exciting its emotions and rousing it to action. In the *Institutio Oratoria*, written in the 1st century AD, Quintilian already stressed the power of visual persuasion, which surpasses that of words:

Nor is it wonderful that gesture, which depends on various forms of movement, should have such power, when pictures, which are silent and motionless, penetrate into our innermost feelings with such power that at times they seem more eloquent than language itself.¹⁷

The main instrument of persuasion, both in literature and the arts, is what Plutarch called painterly vividness: *graphikè enargeia*, which makes the accounts offered by the painter or historian so gripping that the public loses its sense of looking at, or listening to, a representation, and instead believes itself to be present at what is described or painted, as if the event were actually taking place. Such vividness is achieved in the visual arts through the use of linear perspective, among other devices, which

¹⁶ See for instance Exercises 47, 65–69, and 79, for their emphasis on visualisation and composition with the mind's eye of the places and scenes where the Passion took place.

¹⁷ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (Cambridge, Mass. – London: 1921) XI, iii, 67. The account of vividness offered here follows the one by Quintilian, who himself builds on the discussions of Aristotle, the author of the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Cicero.



Fig. 2. Iohannes David, *Veridicus Christianus* (Antwerp, Ex officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum: 1601). Engraving. Image © Leiden University Library, Special Collections.

opens up an infinity of fictive spaces and creates the illusion of continuity between the 'real' space where the viewer stands and pictorial space; or through the introduction into a painting of objects the spectator would expect to encounter in real space, as in Marco Basaiti's *Agony in the Garden* (1510 or 1516), which includes a lamp one takes at first sight to be hanging in the space in front of this altarpiece.

The Greek *enargeia*, derived from *argos*, shining light, meant clearness, distinctness, or vividness; and by extension, putting something before the audience's eyes by turning a strong light on it. In Aristotle's *Rhetorica* (1411.b.24ff.), it is defined together with the etymologically unrelated term *energeia*, as part of his discussion of particularly persuasive stylistic strategies: a vivid representation (*enargeia*) puts what is discussed before the eyes of the audience by using words that signify actuality (*energeia*), in particular, by recourse to metaphor that represents inanimate objects as animate. Quintilian argued that 'oratory fails to have its full effect [...] if its appeal is merely to hearing [...] and [its subjects are] not displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind (VIII.iii.62)'. In fact classical rhetoric is distinguished by a constant stress on the power of visual persuasion, always advising its students that the orator should act on the eyes not the ears of the public, and should excite vivid images before their mind's eyes. In some of the more suggestive formulations of this attention to vivid visuality, Quintilian calls figures of speech the 'face of oratory (IX.i.21)' and 'the lights or as it were the eyes of eloquence (VIII.v.34)'. Eloquence itself becomes visibly alive.

Quintilian had some very practical advice on how to achieve this, particularly in the peroration of a speech; advice that interestingly very much draws on the power of visual and non-verbal persuasion. Where the prosecution has to arouse the fury of the judge or jury, the defendant has to soften them and arouse their pity. *Amplificatio* may be used to heighten the arousal of emotions, but:

Action as well as words may be employed to move the court to tears. Hence the custom of bringing accused persons into court wearing squalid and unkempt attire, and of introducing their children and parents, and it is with this in view that we see blood-stained swords, fragments of bone taken from the wound, and garments spotted with blood, displayed by the accusers, wounds [...], scourged bodies bared to the view. The impression produced by such exhibitions is generally enormous, since they seem to bring the spectators face to face with the cruel facts. (VI.i.30-1)

Persuasive power does not culminate in words, but in showing forth, in demonstrating something *ad oculos*, to the eyes not the ears of the

public. The audience needs to see while they are listening. To achieve this the orator must first bring himself to feel the emotions he wants to excite by imagining them, by bringing them before his mind's eye. Thus 'things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our eyes (VI.ii.29–30)'. The power to achieve this is called *enargeia*, *evidentia*, or *illustratio*. These are all terms that have a strong visual connotation. *Evidentia* has as its root *videre* (to see) and originally meant clearness, distinctness, or perspicuity; and *illustratio* comes from *illustro*, to light up or illuminate, and hence to make illustrious. This power depends, as Quintilian stressed, on an ability to identify with the situations or persons discussed or evoked in the speech:

But what if the mere delivery of words written by another has the power to set our souls on fire with fictitious emotions, what will the orator do whose duty it is *to picture* to himself the facts and who has it in his power to feel the same emotions as his client whose interests are at stake? (VI.ii.35).

4. *Figural Interpretation*

Lifelikeness or vividness in itself is not the aim of religious art. The lifelike figures in sacred images all point to something outside themselves; like figures of speech such as metaphor, they represent something else, they lead the beholder to something beyond themselves.¹⁸ This is the apology used by the Catholic Church (and mentioned in passing in the passage by De Lairese quoted above) for the adoration of sacred images: they are not adored for and in themselves – that would justify the Protestant accusation of idolatry – as is clearly stated in the statements of the Council of Trent about the veneration of sacred images, but rather, the saints, Christ, God the Father, or Mary, whom they represent, are the true subject of veneration.¹⁹

¹⁸ As Leonard Barkan put it recently in "The Heritage of Zeuxis", in Payne A.A. – Kuttner A. – Smick R. (eds.), *Antiquity and its Interpreters* (Cambridge – New York: 2000) 106–7: '[...] why [should] rhetoric and visibility not be one and the same? When Quintilian finds himself at a loss to define the genres of rhetoric because his own categories of genus and species have failed him, he draws a rhetorical analogy to the history of art because it offers a nonhierarchical scheme of differences [...]. After all is said and done, both the represented human form and the operations of metaphor go by the same name: *figura*'. The reference is to Quintilian XII.x.3–9. Both metaphor and *figura* point to something outside themselves, they carry the spectator to something beyond themselves.

¹⁹ Cf. Andries van der Kruysen's *Misse. Haer korte Uytlegginge* [...] (Amsterdam, Van der Kruysen: 1650), in which each part of the liturgy is illustrated by a double image show-

In the seventeenth century there existed a widespread interpretative tradition that was rooted in rhetoric and profoundly Christian in character, and at the same time capable of accommodating painting's visuality: typology or figural interpretation. Invention and interpretation are closely related in rhetorical theory: stylistic strategies for achieving persuasion also functioned as strategies of interpretation, and interpretation itself aims to persuade.²⁰ A similar connection between invention and interpretation characterizes one of the most widespread interpretative methods in the Western world, figural interpretation or typology. Not only was it one of the most influential ways of attributing meaning to nature and art alike; it was also developed in the intensely persuasive setting of early Christian writing as part of the effort to convince heathens of the truth of Christianity. Its late descendants are still with us, for instance in Freudian psychoanalysis. Through figural interpretation, two real, historical objects, events, or persons within the same continuing, unified history are shown to be connected. This is an important difference with allegory, with which figural interpretation is often confused: whereas in allegory images are linked to abstract concepts, typology links real things with real things. As the seventeenth-century German divine Johann Gerhard put the difference:

A type exists when something in the Old Testament is shown to have prefigured or foreshadowed something done or to be done in the New Testament. Allegory is when something from either the Old or the New Testament is explained in some new way and is accommodated to some spiritual doctrine of the holy life [...]. Typology consists in the comparison of facts. Allegory is concerned with words themselves, from which it brings forth some useful, though recondite doctrine.²¹

ing both the actions of the priest and the corresponding stage of Christ's Passion, separated by clouds. The reader/viewer is urged to contemplate this parallel in all its visual detail. On the adoration of images, see the statement of the Council of Trent quoted in Belting H., *Kult und Bild. Eine Geschichte des Bildes in dem Zeitalter vor der Kunst* (Munich: 1990) 616: '[...] weil die Ehre, die man ihnen [den Bildern] erweist, auf die Prototypen übertragen wird, die jene repräsentieren. So geschieht es, dass wir durch Bilder, die wir küssen, vor denen wir das Haupt entblößen oder das Knie beugen, Christum selbst anbeten und jene Heiligen verehren, deren Bild (similitudinem) sie mit sich führen'. Cf. *Sacrosancti et oecumenici concilii Tridentini* [...] (Paris: 1823) 254–256.

²⁰ On the hermeneutic potential of rhetoric, see Cicero's *De Partitione Orationis* XVIII.62; Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* VIII. Proemium 8; *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Book II; and Eden K., *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and its Humanist Reception* (New Haven – London: 1997).

²¹ Quoted in Galdon J.A., *Typology and Seventeenth-Century Literature* (The Hague – Paris: 1975) 33–34.

Figural interpretation resulted from the combination of rhetorical analysis of style with Christian philosophy of history, but its origins and uses are not exclusively Classical or Christian. The Christian view of human history as a unified series of events, unfolding in a temporal continuum that starts with Original Sin and ends in the Last Judgment, is a continuation of the Jewish view of human history, which also started with the Fall of Man, but offered a promise of the coming of the Messiah. This interpretation in terms of types and their foreshadowings of antitypes, of the events and persons in history, combined the Hebrew view of history with the Greek, more particularly with Hellenistic allegorical interpretation, originally developed to explain passages in Homer that were unclear, unseemly, or below the usual standards of quality.²²

The Latin *figura* originally meant the living shape of things. Etymologically it is related to *ingere*, *effigere*, and *fictor* (to form, to feign, to make, and somebody who engages in these activities). The Greek *túpos* shares this sense of shape: it can mean both a stamp, mould, or matrix, or the outline, shape or impression produced by such a matrix, for instance a seal that is impressed on wax. Quintilian defined 'figura' as any 'form of expression to which a new aspect is given': they are what he calls gestures or attitudes of language, occurring when rhetorical or poetical changes to 'the simple and obvious method of expression' have been made. All these visual metaphors play on *figura*'s original meaning of form or shape, that is, physical appearance. By using figures, a speech becomes an animate person, changing its facial expression and using gesture.²³ Books VIII and IX of the *Institutio oratoria* discuss *elocutio* or style, the third of the

²² There is a vast bibliography on figural or typological interpretation. The fundamental modern article is Auerbach E., 'Figura', in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Romanischen Philologie* (Bern – Munich: 1967) 55–93, subsequently published in an English translation as *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays*, trans. R. Manheim (New York: 1959) 11–71. The large majority of studies are devoted to the theological and literary uses of typology. A very useful collection of recent essays on the subject is Bohn V. (ed.), *Typologie. Internationale Beiträge zur Poetik* (Frankfurt am Main: 1988); also see Bercovitch S., *Typology and Early American Literature* (Amherst: 1972), and Korshin P.J., *Typologies in England 1650–1820* (Princeton: 1982), both of which contain very useful annotated bibliographies of relevant literature, starting with Antiquity. For typology and the visual arts in general, see Holländer H., "'Inwendig voller Figur': Figurale und typologische Denkformen in der Malerei", in Bohn, *Typologie* 166–206; Holländer's essay showcases a series of typological interpretations of paintings, rather than offering a history of typological usage in the arts. Finally, see the suggestive Stephen Prickett's suggestive remarks in "The Bible in Literature and Art", in Barton J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: 1992) 160–164. On Renaissance conceptions of typology, see Gordon D.J., "Ripa's Fate", in *The Renaissance Imagination: Essays and Lectures by D.J. Gordon*, ed. S. Orgel (Berkeley: 1975) 51–77.

²³ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* IX.i.13–14.

five *officia oratoris* or stages in the preparation and delivery of a speech: invention, disposition, elocution, memory (that is, learning the speech by heart), and action (the delivery of the speech with appropriate gestures, dress, and behavior). Tropes and figures are discussed under the heading of ornament or *ornatus*. Tropes are the 'artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another', as in metaphor, which Quintilian considered to be a shorter form of simile; synecdoche (when many things are understood from one, a whole from a part, or species stands for genus); metonymy (substitution of one name for another); or allegory.²⁴

Although Quintilian is the first to admit that the difference between tropes and figures is not very clear, and that some authors call tropes figures, he does attempt to formulate how they differ:

The name of *trope* is applied to the transference of expressions from their natural and principal signification to another, with a view to the embellishment of style [...]. A *figure*, on the other hand, as is clear from the name itself, is the term employed when we give our language a conformation (*conformatio*) other than the obvious and the ordinary. Therefore the substitution of one word for another is placed among *tropes*, as for example in the case of metaphor, metonymy, [...] synecdoche [...]. [A] figure does not necessarily involve any alteration either of the order or the strict sense of words.²⁵

He distinguished two main categories, figures of speech in which words, diction, expression, language, or style are used to express a particular thought (which however remains the same while various figures of speech are used to convey it), and figures of thought which are concerned with the mind, its conceptions, and the meaning of words. To the first group belong addition (the repetition of words or clauses: 'Ah Corydon, Corydon'), repetition, climax or gradation, aposiopesis, etc.; to the second, prolepsis, prosopopoeia or impersonation, and ocular demonstration, irony, and allegory.²⁶

In the context of figural interpretation, two figures of thought are of particular interest: allegory ('saying one thing, while intending something else to be understood'), and a figure which is similar to *emphasis*, meaning something different from, or contrary to what you say. Quintilian gives as example a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*, where Dido asks:

²⁴ Tropes: ibidem VIII.vi.1; synecdoche: VIII.vi.19ff; metonymy: VIII.vi.44ff; allegory: VIII.vi.44ff.

²⁵ Ibidem IX.i.4–7.

²⁶ Figures of speech: ibidem IX.iii.1–87; figures of thought: IX.i–ii.107.

Might I not have lived,
From wedlock free, a life without a stain,
happy as beasts are happy?²⁷

In spite of her complaints about marriage she implies that an unmarried life is a life not fit for man, but only for the beasts of the field. In Quintilian's time it had become so widely used that his colleagues often restricted the use of the term *figura* to this turn of speech. It occurs when the speaker indicates or excites suspicion that his meaning is other than his words seem to imply; but the underlying meaning is not contrary to what is said, as in the case of *emphasis*; it is a hidden meaning which the hearer must discover.²⁸ This figure can be suitably employed when it is unsafe to speak out openly; when the hidden meaning is indecorous; or when it adds novelty and variety to the speech to leave things to be discovered by the public rather than expressing them directly.

What is interesting about this figure of speech is not so much its actual character as the interpretive attitude it fosters: the public is encouraged to look under the surface, to go beyond the appearances for meanings that are similar to what is expressed, but for some reason cannot be put directly into words. But the public is also asked to look for similarities. In this the *figura* par excellence is very different from allegory, in which something different is suggested from what is actually said.

The use of *figura* is discussed by Quintilian as part of his advice on *elocutio*, on stylistic strategies of persuasion in writing a speech. But the interpretative attitude it engenders tied in with existing traditions of allegorical interpretation. One of the first Greek authors we know about, Pherecydes of Syros (fl. ca. 550 BC), had begun to realize that some of Homer's words could not be understood literally. Analyzing the words of Zeus to Hera in *Iliad* XV.18–24, he interpreted some of them etymologically, for instance linking *Kronos* to *chronos*

Here, you are incorrigible: I am sure this is your doing. It is through your wicked wiles that Prince Hector has been stopped from fighting [...]. Have you forgotten the time [*chronos*] when I strung you aloft with a couple of anvils hanging from your feet and your hands lashed together with a golden chain you could not break?²⁹

²⁷ Ibidem XII.ii.64; cf. IX.ii.92 and. IX.ii.46; Virgil, *Aeneid* IV.550.

²⁸ Ibidem IX.ii.65.

²⁹ Homer, *Iliad*, trans. E.V. Rieu (Harmondsworth: 1950) 271 (XV.18–24). Pherecydes' interpretation was recorded by Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* I.ii.119; cf. Woolcombe K.J., "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology",

By the end of the fourth century allegorical and etymological interpretation of Homer had become widely practiced. Metrodorus of Lampsacus (331–278 BC) was accused of turning everything in Homer into allegory: 'For he says that neither Hera, nor Athene, nor Zeus are what those persons suppose who consecrate to them sacred enclosures and groves, but parts of nature and certain arrangements of the elements'.³⁰ From the third century BC, allegorical interpretation became something of a Stoic speciality. Chrysippus of Soli (280–207 BC) was one of the first of its exponents to apply allegorical interpretation to a painting. According to Origenes:

In one place Chrysippus [...] expounds the meaning of a picture at Samos, in which Hera is portrayed as performing unmentionable obscenities with Zeus. This honourable philosopher says in his treatises that matter receives the generative principles of God, and contains them in itself for the ordering of the Universe. For in the picture at Samos, matter is Hera and God is Zeus.³¹

Quite early in its development allegorical interpretation was therefore applied to the visual arts.

Figural or typological interpretation is based on a view of history as a unified continuum in which earlier events announce or foreshadow subsequent happenings. Within the Jewish and Christian religions, this was part of the view of history as sacred history, created and shaped by God. But the tendency to read history in such terms is almost universal, and may be the result of a universal human need or tendency of thought to give significance to historical events.³² The mediaeval and Renaissance notion of the *translatio Imperii*, of Northern nations continuing the Roman Empire, is a case in point.³³ In any case, a few instances of this can be found in Greek historians, for instance Plutarch, who in *De Fortuna Alexandri* observed that Homer in his description of Agamemnon as 'both a good king, and an excellent fighter in war' seems not merely to celebrate, but also to announce, the greatness of Alexander.³⁴

in Lampe G.W.H. – Woollcombe K.J. (eds.), *Essays on Typology*, Studies in Biblical Theology 22 (London: 1957) 50–51.

³⁰ Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* (21), quoted in Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* 51.

³¹ Origenes, *Contra Celsum* (4.48), quoted in Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* 51.

³² On the anthropological aspect of typology, see Korshin, *Typologies in England*.

³³ Cf Holländer, "Inwendig voller Figur" 172 and 184.

³⁴ Plutarch, *De Fortuna Alexandri* (X), as quoted in Maas A.J., "Types in Scripture", in Herbermann C. et al (eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. (New York: 1912) V 692–706. On Virgil's typological use of quotations from Homer in the Aeneid, see Zinn E. – Knauer G.N., *Die Aeneis und Homer. Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate*

Around 100 BC, Pseudo-Aristeas and Aristobulos applied Stoic methods of exegesis to the Old Testament. A century later the Hellenized Jew Philo Judaeus would produce his Greek allegorized exegesis of the Pentateuch. He thereby prepared the application of Stoic allegorical reading to the entire Bible. At the same time allegorical interpretation of the Jewish Bible was not entirely an affair of Stoic or other Hellenistic allegorical exegesis; it tied in with a long-established Palestinian tradition of Rabbinic interpretation of the Septuagint. Whereas Hellenistic interpreters such as Philo tried to get at the hidden spiritual meaning of the text and therefore had to go beyond, or even subvert, the meaning of the words, Rabbinic interpretation aimed at using the actual wording of the text to describe God's ways with man. Central to this endeavor was the view that history forms a unified whole, in which events at the beginning foreshadow, announce, or prophesy their fulfillment at the end.³⁵ Somewhat similar views of history may also be found in Roman authors, most conspicuously in Book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid*, where Rome is presented as the new Troy against the background of a cyclical view of history, visualized – not to say figured – by a wheel. In fact one could argue that the *Aeneid*, with its narrative of the destruction of Troy and foundation of Rome, separated by Aeneas' descent into the Underworld to learn both about the past and the future, is probably the best-known classical formulation of the philosophy of history on which typology is based.³⁶ But the most famous passage, and one eagerly seized by Christian apologists from Augustine to Dante, is that in Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*, where the birth of a child is celebrated, and a new golden age is announced when nature will again be paradise and 'the serpent shall die'.³⁷

It is against this background – the rhetorical use of *figura* to suggest hidden, but similar meaning, primarily as a stylistic strategy, but with important implications for the interpretative attitude of the public; the Stoic allegorical reading of important texts such as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* to

in der *Aeneis* (Göttingen: 1964) 353–357; Wehrli M., "Sacra Poesis. Biblepik als europäische Tradition", in idem, *Formen mittelalterlicher Erzählung. Aufsätze* (Zürich: 1969) 51–71.

³⁵ Cf. Davis Th. M., "Die Traditionen puritanischer Typologie", in Bohn, *Typologie*, 236–242. This chapter in Bohn's book is a translation of an earlier English version that appeared in Bercovitch's *Typology and Early American Literature*.

³⁶ On typology considered as a combination of a rhetorical figure and a particular view of history, see Frye N., *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: 1982) 78–87.

³⁷ Virgil, *Eclogues* IV.4–10; for Augustine's reading of Virgil, see in particular *On the City of God* XII.14; cf. Frye, *The Great Code* 96–97.

recover their sense obscured by difficulties of language or corrupt manuscripts; and the Palestinian Rabbinic tradition of reading the words of the Septuagint in such a way that they show God's deeds and intentions based on a view of history as a unified continuum of fall from grace and ultimate Messianic redemption – that the development of figural interpretation must be understood.³⁸ In a few places in the Old Testament, and a substantial number of passages in the Gospels and Apostolic writings, events that have happened before the birth of Christ are presented as shadows, patterns, or models of events to come after His birth. In the *Septuagint* the Greek term used is *túpos* (from the verb *túptein*, to strike). As we have seen, *túpos* can either signify the matrix or mould from which seal impressions are made on wax, or the impressions or images made by the seal or matrix. Liddell and Scott list the following main meanings: a hollow mould or die; an archetype or pattern; a model capable of exact repetition in numerous instances; a prescribed form or model to be interpreted; or the seal-impression, cast, or replica in a mould, a figure worked in relief, whether made by moulding, modelling or sculpture, and a carved figure or image.³⁹ The uses of the word in the Bible correspond to these two main meanings, as is shown in a speech of St. Stephen in the New Testament:

And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rephan, the figures (*túpous*) which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure (*túpon*) that he had seen.⁴⁰

In this speech St Stephen quoted the only two passages in the Old Testament where *túpos* occurs, *Amos* 5:26 and *Exodus* 25:40. In the first it means a graven image, in the second a pattern or model. But there are other passages in the Old Testament which point to the typological interpretation developed by the Apostles: the Golden Calf for instance is described as a type of subsequent schismata in which these statues also played a role (*Exodus* 32:4 and *1 Kings* 12:28).

This way of interpreting biblical history is generally said to begin with Paul's *Epistle to the Hebrews* 5:14, in which Adam is described as a type of

³⁸ On the connection between the rhetorical use of *figura* as a figure of thought to hide the real meaning of what one is saying and the Jewish or early Christian use of types or *figurae*, see Auerbach, "Figura" 72–3.

³⁹ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek Lexicon*, (Oxford: 1940), s.v. 'túpos'.

⁴⁰ *Acts* 7:43–44 (King James Version).

Christ.⁴¹ The words used are *túpos* in the Greek version, *forma* in the Vulgate, and *figura* in the King James Version. In the first *Epistle of Peter*, the baptism of Christ is presented as the antitype (again translated as 'figure' in the King James Version) of Noah's salvation of mankind from the flood (3:21).⁴² But Christ Himself was also a typologist. In the *Gospel of John*, he is reported to have said: 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up' (3:14), suggesting that the raising of the brazen serpent in the Old Testament prefigures the raising of Christ on the Cross in the New Testament. What these passages show is an interpretation of biblical history as a unified continuum, in which events or persons in the Old Testament are said to announce, prophesy, or foreshadow subsequent events in the New Testament, by which they are fulfilled and overwhelmed. The tree of Jesse is the type of the Cross, its antitype; the journey through the Red Sea a type of Christian Baptism; the paschal lamb a type of Christ's death on the cross.

There may be said to be two rationales that inform this exegetical procedure. One is hermeneutic and rhetorical, the other theological. An object or person A may be said to be the type of object or person B because of a resemblance in shape, form, or character that is so strong that it convinces. But the defining characteristic of figural or typological interpretation is that it stays with the appearances. Unlike allegorical exegesis it does not delve behind them to reveal a hidden meaning; instead, it takes the outward appearance, the shape of object a as the starting point. Both the Greek *túpos* and the Latin *figura* (like the English figure) share this reference to the appearance, in the case of *figura* even to the living shape, the aspect or form of an object or person. The theological rationale is the Christian philosophy of history. It was formulated in the second century by Melito of Sardis in a *Homily on the Passion*, in a choice of words that would have a long resonance through the ages and across a wide range of human pursuits. He likened the types in the Old Testament to the scale-models a sculptor uses as patterns when he is carving a full-scale sculpture. The model is only of service while the statue is being made. By looking at it, the sculptor forms a mental picture of the finished work and knows how to shape the material. But when the statue is finished, the model can be discarded. In the same way:

⁴¹ On the hermeneutical and rhetorical aspects of Paul's use of typology, see Prickett, "The Bible in Literature and Art" 160–61.

⁴² See also 1 *Corinthians* 10:6–11 and 15:21; 2 *Corinthians* 3:14; *Galatians* 4:21–31; *Romans* 5:12ff; and *Acts* 8:32.

The people were held in honor before the Church arose, and the Law was wondrous before the Light of the Gospel was shed abroad. But since the Church arose and the Gospel was shed abroad upon men on earth, the type is made void, giving over the image to the natural truth.

Melito used types in the same sense as St Paul. He believed Old Testament types were powerful mysteries because of the truth they foreshadowed:

The sacrifice of the sheep was found to be the salvation of Israel, and the death of the sheep became the life of the people, and the blood abashed the angel. Tell me, angel, what stayed thy hand, the sacrifice of the sheep or the life of the Lord? The death of the sheep, or the type of the Lord?⁴³

From its earliest occurrences, artistic metaphor is used to explain the working of types and antitypes. Types are compared to sculptor's models, to sketches and fully worked out paintings, and to theatrical representation. As the English theologian William Tyndale, whose works were much read in the Low Countries, put it in 1530:

And moreover, though sacrifices and ceremonies can be no ground or foundation to build upon; that is, though we can prove nought with them, yet when we have once found out Christ and his mysteries, then we may borrow figures, that is to say allegories, similitudes, or examples, to open Christ, and the secrets of God hid in Christ, even unto the quick, and to declare them more lively and sensibly with them than with all the words in the world. For similitudes have more virtue and power with them than bare words, and lead a man's wits farther into the pith and marrow and spiritual understanding of the thing, than all the words that can be imagined. And though also that all the ceremonies and sacrifices have, as it were, a star-light of Christ, yet some there be that have, as it were, the light of the broad day, a little before the sun-rising; and express him, and the circumstances and virtue of his death so plainly, as if we should see his passion on a scaffold, or in a stage-play, openly before the eyes of the people; as the scape-goat, the brazen serpent, the ox burnt without the host, the passover lamb, &c. [...].⁴⁴

Both Origen and John Chrysostom took over Melito's use of artistic metaphor, but the latter changed it from sculpture to painting, speaking of the outline sketch a painter makes when preparing a portrait, and comparing it to the fully finished painting. He also clarifies Melito's discussion of the mysterious power of the Passover sacrifice, by adding that the blood

⁴³ Melito of Sardis, *Homily on the Passion* St. D. XI 107 ff, as translated in Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* 71–72.

⁴⁴ Tyndale William, *A Prologue to the Book of Leviticus*, in *The Work of William Tyndale*, ed. G.E. Duffield (Appleford: 1964) 60; cf. Davis, "Die Traditionen puritanischer Typologie" 257.

sprinkled on the lintels of Jewish homes at the first Passover was effective because it was a type of the Blood of Christ.⁴⁵

Tertullian was the first to introduce the term *figura*. In *Adversus Marcionem* III.16.4, events and persons in the Old Testament (Moses, Noah) are called a 'figurae futuri', a figure of things to be. In IV.40, Christ's saying at the Last Supper while breaking bread – 'this is my body' – is interpreted to mean 'this is a figure of my body'. Tertullian adds that it could not have been a figure unless the bread had in truth been his body. In V.7, the paschal lamb is called a 'figura Christi' because of the similitude between the blood of the lamb and that of Christ. What all these passages have in common is that they construct a resemblance between two things that is based on the corporeal similarity or iconic resemblance between them. Both parts of figural interpretation are sensual or corporeal; only the mental act of understanding, the *intellectualis spiritualis*, is spiritual.⁴⁶

During the Middle Ages the scope of typology was extended beyond the Bible: pagan figures such as Hercules were presented as types of Christ, and pagan art was seen as a type of Christian art. The twelfth-century author Honorius Augustodensis offers a particularly interesting example of this process. In his *Gemma animae* he explained the seven parts of Mass (Oratio, Epistle, Graduale, Halleluja, Evangelium, Offertorium, and Communio) as the increasing liberation of God's chosen people by Moses and their return to Israel by Joshua; at the same time this interpretation of the Mass offers a series of typological interpretations of the Old Testament. At the end of mass, for instance, the victory of David over Goliath is celebrated as a figure ('hoc [...] in figura praecesserat') of the struggle of Christ with the Devil. The actions and words of the priest here are described as that of a sacred actor, the antitype of pagan actors. His vestments are his harness. Past and present are opposed but connected; the events in the Old Testament prefigure those of the New; and even pagan history and art have become types of Christian religion.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Origen, *Homily 10.1 in Leviticum* (GCS, p. 441.5); John Chrysostom, *Homily 10.2 in Phil.* (Gaume XI, 276D); the explanation of the power of types occurs in *Apud Jo. Dam. parall.* (M.96.17A). Cf Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* 72.

⁴⁶ See in particular Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.40.3: 'Professus itaque se concupiscentia concupisse edere pascha ut suum – indignum enim, ut quid alienum concupisceret deus – acceptum panem et distributum discipulis corpus suum illum fecit hoc est corpus meum dicendo, id est "figura corporis mei". Figura autem non fuisset nisi veritatis esset corpus. Ceterum uacua res, quod est phantasma, figuram capere non posset'. Cf. *Q. Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Opera I*, ed. V. Bulhart, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 1 (Turnhout: 1954) 656. See also the very interesting remarks on this passage in Auerbach, "Figura" 66–7.

⁴⁷ Honorius Augustodensis, *Gemma Animae* I.82, "De Armis Sacerdotis", PL 172, 569D. See also PL 172, 570A: 'Sciendum quod hi qui tragoedias in theatri recitabant, actus pug-

What makes figural interpretation so important for a study of the ways people have tried to make sense of the visual arts through the centuries is that, unlike allegory, it stays with appearances. It is intensely visual in character. As we have seen in the passages from Tertullian where the word *figura* is introduced to discuss typological interpretation, it is the outward, living shape of persons and events that is both the focus of interpretation and that which gives them their mysterious significance. Also, many of the metaphors used to explain its effectiveness are taken from the arts. As Erich Auerbach, who has done so much to revive contemporary interest in typology, pointed out in his fundamental contributions to the study of figural interpretation:

Its integral, firmly teleological, view of history and the providential order of the world gave it the power to capture the imagination [...] of the convert nations. Figural interpretation was a fresh beginning and a rebirth of man's creative powers.⁴⁸

It provided one of the most widely used conceptual frameworks both for an understanding of the arts, an apology for their use and enjoyment, and a rationale for achieving and grasping their effect as persuasive statements, initially of religious truths, but subsequently also of secular subject matter.

Typology was thus one of the most widespread interpretative attitudes in the Western world from late Antiquity until the nineteenth century. It started to die out in the eighteenth century under the influence of rationalism and Cartesianism, but was used extensively by John Ruskin in his interpretations of art and architecture.⁴⁹ In the seventeenth century it was still very current, both as a technique of interpretation, and as a strategy of invention. Its use by seventeenth-century English preachers and authors has received much scholarly attention, but as far as I can see, Dutch typological art and writing have not been studied very extensively. It was used quite frequently by Dutch contemporaries of Vermeer. Huygens

nantium gestibus populo repraesentabant. Sic tragicus noster pugnam Christi populo Christiano in theatro ecclesiae gestibus suis repraesentat, eique victoriam redemptionis suae inculcat'. Quoted in Ohly F., "Halbbiblische und außerbiblische Typologie", in idem, *Schriften zur mittelalterlichen Bedeutungsforschung* (Darmstadt: 1983) 368. For the ramifications of this approach in emblem books, see, among other examples, Engelgrave Hendrik, *Lux Evangelica sub Velum Sacrorum Emblematorum recondita in anni dominicas* (Antwerp, Jan Cnobbaert: 1654), which offers in the subscriptio a substantial amount of typological interpretation of nature and of the profane, literary and philosophical history of Antiquity, which are all linked to Christian doctrine and history.

⁴⁸ Auerbach, "Figura" 8.

⁴⁹ For example, see Landow G.P., *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows. Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought* (Boston: 1980).

translated some of John Donne's typological poems, such as *Good Friday, Made as I was Riding Westwarde that Day* (in which, incidentally, the soul of man is compared to a world globe).

Catholic poets such as Michael de Swaen combine typology with vivid visualisation of the Passion of Christ along the lines of the *Spiritual Exercises*:

O Bloedbad, Gy syt het roode meir
 waardoor sy mochten trekken
 Die naar 't beloofde Land al hun begeerten werken
 [...]
 Gy syt den Balsem
 voor den diepsten herte-stoot
 Wien dien Samaritaan in sooveel wonden goot.⁵⁰

(O Shower of blood, thou art the red lake
 through which they were allowed to pass
 who directed all their desires towards the promised Land
 [...]
 Thou art the Balsam
 for the deepest heart-cut
 which the Samaritan poured into so many wounds.)

Vondel used it very often in his religious poetry. The entire second book of his *Johannes de Boetgesant* (1662) consists of a typological reading of the Old Testament for types and shadows of the Redeemer and his sacrifice. Perhaps the most interesting case is a short passage in *De Heerlijkheid der Kerke* (1663):

Chief wisdom itself wants to design the Church, through shadows and
 twilight of the promise of salvation, a promise and sketch and image and
 hand and index of predictions,
 and to give us first a rough example.
 Thus rises dawn before light gives its paint and life
 to all things, and the picture of the world
 that first seemed a shadow, is animated by its brush.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Swaen Michael de, "XII. Gesang: Op Jesus' bloedige Gheselinge", in *Het Leven en de Dood van Jezus Christus* (Bruges, Joseph van Praet: 1694) 104; cf. Celen V. – Huysmans C. – Sabbe K.W.M. (eds.), *Werken van Michiel de Swaen. Vol. IV: Het Leven en de Dood van Jezus Christus, deel II* (Antwerp: 1930) 104.

⁵¹ Vondel J. van den, *Heerlijkheid der Kerke*, in Spies M. – Smidts-Veldt M.B. (eds.), *Vondel. Volledig dichtwerken oorspronkelijk proza. Verzorgd door Albert Verwey* (Amsterdam: 1986) 1126:

'[...] wil de opperwijsheid zelf, door schemeringe en schimmen
 van heilsbelofte en eed en schets en beeldewerke,
 en hand en vinger van voorspellingen, de Kerk
 ontwerpen, en ons eerst in 't ruw het voorbeeld geven.

God himself is here both the creator of a system of types and antitypes, and compared to the light of early morning which like a painter gives life to all he paints with his brushes. A similar conflation of God and the artist occurs in John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*:

Neither art thou thus a *figurative*, a *metaphoricall* God in thy word only, but in thy *workes* too. The *stile* of thy *works*, the *phrase* of thine *actions*, is *metaphoricall*. The institution of thy whole *worship* in the *old Law*, was a continuall *Allegory*; *types and figures* overspread all; and *figures* flowed into *figures*, and powred themselves out into *farther figures*; *Circumcision* carried a *figure* of *Baptisme*; and *Baptisme* carries a *figure* of that *purity*, which we shall have in *perfection* in the *new Jerusalem*.⁵²

Its use was not limited to the Scriptures; the English Catholic Walter Montague, who lived from 1603 to 1677 and was a close advisor of Queen Henrietta Maria, urged courtiers to consider the splendors of the court only as types of the heavenly splendours:

[...] all the exterior state and Ceremony and Reverence (being truly conceived) is significative as referr'd to the images of God, and thus all the distinguished ranks of honour, which compose the formall order of Courts, are figures of those different degrees of Ministers, which attend their Originall, the King of Kings: and in this order, the Glory and Majesty which exteriorly in all sorts, resideth about the persons of Princes, may be fitly understood to represent (in such shaddowes as these materialities can make) the celestiall magnificence of the King of Heaven: so that one who will interpret religiously the Ceremonies of Princes Courts, may say, *all things befall them in figures*.⁵³

Even though typology as a strategy of invention in the visual arts became less common after 1500,⁵⁴ it was still used in a few conspicuous examples such as Michelangelo's frescoes for the Sistine Chapel and Rubens's *Triumph of the Eucharist* of 1625–1627. It was also applied by Dutch poets, including Vondel, to paintings, as in the poem written on the frame of Carel van Manders *Passage of the People of Israel through the Jordan* of 1605 [Fig. 3]:

Zo rijst de dageraad eer 't licht zijn verf en leven
Aan alle dingen schenkt, en 's waerelds tafereel
Dat eerst een schaduw scheen, bezielt met zijn penseel'.

⁵² Donne J., *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. J. Sparrow (Cambridge: 1923) 114.

⁵³ Montague Walter, *Miscellanea Spiritualia or Devout Essays* (London: 1648), *The ninth Treatise. Of the Condition of Courts, Princes and Courtiers. Divided into three Sect. Section I. The best Notion of Courts proposed* (London, John Crook, Gabriel Bedell, & Partners: 1654) 86.

⁵⁴ For some background on its role in mediaeval painting, see Acres A., "The Columba Altarpiece and the Time of the World", *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998) 423–451.



Fig. 3. Carel van Mander, *Passage of the People of Israel through the Jordan* (1605). Oil on panel, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans Van Beuningen. Image © Museum Boymans Van Beuningen.

Every Christian, much battled here in this world,
Will in the end reach the realm full of sweet joys,
But the Jordan, death, has to be suffered,
Because it is the way all flesh has to walk,
The last enemy one has to vanquish,
If this journey is successful, everything will be well.⁵⁵

Here a typological link is forged between the crossing of the river Jordan in the Old Testament and the death of every Christian and Christ himself: all events are part of the same history of salvation.

5. *A Typological Reading of the “Allegory of Faith”*

But to return to the *Allegory of Faith*. In my view, this is – among many other things – a picture that demands a typological interpretation instead of an iconographical or allegorical reading. In this context it is not irrel-

⁵⁵ Quoted in Bakker B., *Landschap en Wereldbeeld from Van Eyck to Rembrandt* (Ph.D. dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: 2003) 182: ‘Elck Christen hier ter wereld seer bestreden/Komt noch op’t lest in ‘t rijck vol vreuchden soet,/Maer den Jordaen, de doodt moet zijn gheleden,/Want ‘t is den wech voor alle vlees te treden,/Den vyant lest diemen verwinnen moet,/Gheluckt dees reys maer wel, so ist al goet’.

evant to mention that in its first occurrence in a sales catalogue of 1699, it was described as 'A seated Woman with many meanings, representing the New Testament [...] painted in a powerful and glowing way'. Subsequently, it was again described as 'representing the New Testament' in 1718.⁵⁶ The term 'allegory' was a nineteenth-century addition. By its very subject matter and status as a pictorial representation, the *Allegory of Faith* calls for a typological interpretation, because like typology itself, it is structured around the New Covenant which was made between man and God through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, which is daily re-enacted and commemorated in the Mass's celebration of the Eucharist. Incidentally, the scene on the curtain has been interpreted as the marriage of Rebecca and Ezechiel, traditionally considered as a type for the marriage between the Christian soul and Christ.⁵⁷ What we see here is what the painter sees; and if we compare this painter to the devout painter of the *Veridicus Christianus*, who paints not what he has in front of him but an inner vision, we here have a typological vision linking type and antitype, implying their connection. The apple and the snake represent the Old Testament; the cornerstone, the crown of thorns, and the painting of the Crucifixion represent the New Covenant; and the chalice, statue, and Bible or missal represent the Eucharist. The woman beholds both the crushing of the snake and the Crucifixion; through her contemplative devotion she receives the spirit of faith; the instilment of faith is signaled by her gesture. In other words, what is presented here is the structure of Christian history through which typological interpretation is made possible, and in which it is made present: the cornerstone is a type of Christ; the blood of the snake is a type of Christ's sacrificial blood. At the same time Christian history becomes the object of Christian faith, in that original sin is redeemed through the sacrifice of Christ. Through its resistance to conventional iconographical or allegorical readings, *The Allegory of Faith* forces the beholder to take a different interpretative approach. This resistance is caused by the combination of elements that also occur in allegorical images, but which does not add up to a coherent whole supported by tradition, and by the extreme vividness and arresting pictorial power of the work. It calls for the sort of interpretative attitude on the part of the spectator that typology demands, in which every object invites careful scrutiny because of its lifelike presence, and in which the scrutiny does

⁵⁶ Broos – Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer* 194.

⁵⁷ Liedtke, *Vermeer and the Delft School* 309–402.

not result in a linkage between the object and an abstract concept, but on the contrary, in a connection between it and some other object, person, or event in the same historical reality.

Therefore *The Allegory of Faith*, or rather, *Vermeer's Seated Woman with Many Meanings, Representing the New Testament* may be considered as a typological representation of the New Covenant. We are now able to say what happens here: the crushing of original sin, the sealing of the New Testament through Christ's death on the Cross, and the repetition and re-enactment of that sacrifice through the celebration of Mass. What we see is a depiction of these three key aspects, and a woman who realizes this, who experiences true faith, in and through her contemplation of the Crucifixion in the reflecting globe; that is, gazing at a representation of a representation, not reading of the book of Scripture, makes her realize her faith. By looking at this symbol of the painter's mind, which reflects the painter's studio as well, her feelings become vivid – hence the gesture. *Fides est per oculos*. The auto-referentiality of this painting as painting forces itself upon the spectator because the majority of objects included are or contain images: the curtain, painted Crucifixion, world globe, reflecting globe, statue, chalice, and gilt leather panelling. They all serve to draw attention to its nature as a type, as if it wanted us to tell: do not take these objects at face value, but consider us closely, as types. And this suggests that there is a double level of meaning in the painting: *The Allegory of Faith* offers a visual representation of types and antitypes, and it represents their connection – in and through faith, personified by the woman in blue and white. Painting the painting was an act of faith, but understanding it in these terms becomes one as well.

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II. VISUAL ANALOGY AS AN EXEGETICAL INSTRUMENT

EMPATHY AS A TYPE OF EARLY NETHERLANDISH VISUAL WIT

Bret L. Rothstein

How did devotional accomplishment look in the fifteenth-century Low Countries? This question has two senses, one literal and the other metaphorical. With respect to the former sense, the profusion of texts and images that accompanied early modern religious life speaks to a complex set of visual habits. It therefore seems worth asking what those habits comprised: how presumptions of interpretive capability determined visual form, how one was encouraged and expected to interpret said form, and so forth – in short, how a skillful devout was expected to observe religious objects. The latter, metaphorical sense of my question pertains to the kinds of social differentiation that would have derived from individual religious experience. I have in mind not the stylistic or technical assessment of pictures, but rather the assessment of habits that governed the use of those pictures.¹ Specifically, I am interested in how people conceived of religious practice as a particular type of early modern perspicacity.

To get at this perspicacity, I would like to discuss a North Netherlandish *Tree of Jesse* (ca. 1500) now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam [Fig. 1]. Of particular importance is an aspect of private devotional experience that may seem at odds with such ideas of social exchange – not to mention this painting: empathic spirituality. I say this precisely because depth of feeling, particularly as an aspect of religious experience, seems alien to the kind of context implied by social sorting on the basis of intellectual skill.

Executed for a female devout from Holland (most likely Haarlem), the Amsterdam painting is generally attributed either to Geertgen tot Sint Jans or, especially recently, Jan Mostaert.² While attribution may seem like an ornamental concern, it actually provides an interesting point of

¹ On the intersection between religious practice and these sorts of qualitative judgments, see Rothstein B., *Sight and Spirituality in Early Netherlandish Painting* (Cambridge: 2005), esp. 138–173.

² For more on this painting, see Os H. van – et al., *Netherlandish Art in the Rijksmuseum, 1400–1600* (Zwolle: 2000) 72–74; Lammertse F. – Giltay J. (eds.), *Vroege Hollanders: schilderkunst van de late Middeleeuwen* (Rotterdam: 2008) 117–120. For a more recent discussion of the possibility of Geertgen's authorship, see Filedt Kok J.-P., "The Tree of Jesse – Attributed to Geertgen tot Sint Jans", in the online catalogue of early Netherlandish paintings



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 6] Geertgen tot Sint Jans or Jan Mostaert, *Tree of Jesse* (ca. 1500). Oil on panel, 89.8 × 60.6 cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

entry into my topic, for it has been haunted by an odd and surprisingly durable idea about early Netherlandish devotional imagery in general as well as Geertgen's paintings in specific. James Snyder once criticized this idea by suggesting that doubts about Geertgen's authorship seemed to derive from the belief that, '... [T]he lighthearted presentation of the theme seems foreign to Geertgen's sober and contemplative nature'.³

Note in particular the idea that this painting's lightheartedness, or whatever we call it, somehow excludes more 'sober and contemplative' topics. It is as if artists (and, by implication, patrons) associated with unpleasant or emotionally charged subjects were incapable of shifting their attention – as if, in short, empathy was somehow inherently stupid. Such a rigid position is hard to maintain, though, especially in the face of this painting, which places considerable emphasis on the ability to coordinate both topics and moods, and not merely in its subject matter. In fact, I suspect that such coordination was of fundamental importance, religious as well as social, for the patron and contemporaneous viewers of this image.

Things seem easy enough at first. Jesse reclines, somnolent, with a stout trunk jutting from his crotch. Above him we find 12 kings of Judea listed as ancestors of Christ in the first chapter of the gospel of *Matthew*.⁴ Three other figures frame the base of the tree, amplifying its Biblical origins and spiritual significance. In the lower left corner of the painting a young nun kneels in prayer, a rosary hanging from her arm. Behind her and to the left, an elderly man usually identified as Isaiah leans on a staff.⁵ At

from the Rijksmuseum of 2009, which includes bibliography (<http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/collectie/SK-A-3901/de-boom-van-jesse>).

As for the origins of the young woman in the lower left corner of the composition, I favor an Augustinian association partly due to her habit, which bears some resemblance to that of a Canoness of St Augustine, and partly due to the wealth and social connections of Augustinian houses in Haarlem.

³ Snyder J., "The Early Haarlem School of Painting II: Geertgen tot Sint Jans", *The Art Bulletin* 42, 2 (1960) 130.

⁴ There remains some doubt concerning the identification of some figures, but all appear to come from the second of three clusters, the so-called 'royal order' of kings. The origins of the subject lie in *Isaiah* 11:1–3, to which people frequently added the gospel either of *Matthew* or of *Luke*. See, among others, Ligtenberg R., O.F.M., "De genealogie van Christus in de beeldende kunst der middeleeuwen, voornamelijk van het westen. Ter blijde weerkomst eener Nederlandsche schilderij binnen Nederlands grenzen", *Oudheidkundig Jaarboek* (3rd ser.) 9, 1 (1929) 3–54; Watson A., *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (Oxford: 1934).

⁵ This identification comes from Snyder J., "Geertgen schildert de voorouders van Christus", *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 5, 3 (1957) 88. Cf. van Os et al., *Netherlandish Art* 72, who call the man Saul, I suspect due to an apparent interaction between him and David. I am inclined to agree with Snyder here, in part because Saul does not figure in the ancestry

right stands a man customarily identified as the rector of a Haarlem religious institution.

The latter is unusual, insofar as the use of a second contemporaneous figure departs from pictorial tradition. (One most often finds an apostle to the right of the tree.) Nonetheless, certain characteristics favor this identification. First, the man's later fifteenth-century outfit distinguishes him from the Biblical figures in the painting.⁶ Second, his placement, his apparent attention to the young nun, and the orientation of his book toward her and the viewer suggest for him the role of spiritual advisor, as Henk van Os and others have suggested.⁷ Third, the presence of that book also allows this figure to emulate the appearance of an apostle or evangelist and thus to remain visually consistent with the painting's underlying theme of reciprocity between Jewish and Christian scripture.⁸ Consequently, he serves not only as a guide to religious texts but also as both a guide for and prompt to the interpolative understanding of those texts – to, in short, a broadly exegetical project.

The Amsterdam Tree of Jesse itself provides numerous prompts to such understanding, both in its general subject and in that subject's subsidiary components. Take, for instance, the figure of Abia [Fig. 2]. Note in particular his crown and sash of roses, which would have evoked a number of associations for the contemporaneous viewer. The most immediate of these has to do with the rosary, which by the time of this painting had become firmly linked with roses and rose-chaplets or garlands, due to their associations with courtly romance.⁹ (Middle Dutch provides sev-

of Christ and in part because the Tree of Jesse generally boasts a prophet at left and an apostle at right. On this specific aspect of the genre, see Watson, *Early Iconography* 13–26 and 54–55.

⁶ Cf. the discussion of devotional portraits in Martens D., "Portrait explicite et portrait implicite à la fin du Moyen Âge: l'exemple du Maître de la Légende de sainte Catherine (alias Pierot de le Pasture)", *Jaarboek van het koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (Antwerp: 1998) 9–67; Bauman G., "Early Flemish Portraits, 1425–1525", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 43, 4 (1986) esp. 12–16; and Heller E., *Das altniederländische Stifterbild* (Munich: 1976) 50–53.

⁷ See van Os et al., *Netherlandish Art* 72–73, who also speculate concerning the man's social station.

⁸ The late Ann H. van Buren provided generous help concerning this man. In correspondence she emphasized both the contemporaneity of his clothing and the fact that his behavior emulates that of an apostle or evangelist.

⁹ Concerning early names for the rosary, see Kronenburg J.A.F., C.S.S.R., *Maria's heerlijkheid in Nederland. Geschiedkundige schets van de vereering der Heilige Maagd in ons vaderland, van de vroegste tijden tot op onze dagen*, volume 3 (Amsterdam: 1905) 362–367; Winston-Allen A., *Stories of the Rose: the Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park, 1997) 81–89.



Fig. 2. Geertgen tot Sint Jans or Jan Mostaert, *Tree of Jesse* (ca. 1500). Oil on panel, 89.8 × 60.6 cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum. Detail of the center-right portion of the painting.

eral cognates for the Latin *rosarium*, including *rosencrens*, *rosenperk*, and *rosenhoetkijn*.) The inclusion of beads looped over the arm of the nun further confirms the significance of the rosary for this painting.¹⁰

This is important, for the fifteenth-century Netherlandish rosary constituted a mental discipline that included strong visual content, plus an important degree of intellectual rigor as well as emotional vigor. Manuscripts dating from around 1489 recommend that recitation comprise three sets of fifty Ave Marias, with each set broken into clusters of ten, followed by a *Pater noster* after each cluster. Those clusters were to correspond to specific narrative episodes, or what the Dominican Alanus de Rupe had variously termed articles, points, or prompts to memory (*artikelen*, *puntjes*, and *ghedenckenissen*, in Middle Dutch).¹¹ These prompts were mental images designed to spur meditation on larger themes – for instance, using the first fifty Ave Marias as a basis for visualizing and then considering the youth of Jesus, the second fifty for meditating on the Passion and its spiritual significance, and the third fifty for considering redemption. Thus, one began with a physical prompt (palpating beads) that cued a set of words, to which the devout then attached salient narrative or emblematic imagery that would provide the foundation for subsequent abstraction.¹²

Rosary devotion did not always entail the use of *ghedenckenissen*. There was in fact a range of approaches in the Low Countries, from the simple, in which one pursued relatively few supplementary concepts, to more complex versions dependent on extensive compilations of *ghedenckenissen*. Nevertheless, the complex sort seems to have been the norm in the later fifteenth century. Indeed, some cases even seem to have allowed for a measure of improvisation in the selection and use of images.¹³ Thus, the ideal contemporaneous with the Amsterdam Tree of Jesse was one of combining maximum exegetical potential with the greatest number of repetitions possible. That is why another vernacular author offered

¹⁰ For more on the relationship of Geertgen's *œuvre* to the rosary, see Ridderbos B., "The Rotterdam-Edinburgh diptych: *Maria in sole* and the devotion of the rosary", in Os H. van et al., *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300–1500*, trans. M. Hoyle (Princeton: 1994) 151–156.

¹¹ De Boer B., "De souter van Alanus de Rupe, II: de souter volgens de Nederlandse Alanus", *Ons geestelijk erf* 30, 1 (1956) 160–165 and 172–174.

¹² On the broader, complex, and quite persistent significance of sensation itself, see Falkenburg R.L., *The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450–1550* (Philadelphia – Amsterdam: 1994).

¹³ De Boer, "De souter van Alanus de Rupe II" 160–165.

himself as an example of best practice: 'I recite all three [sets of fifty *Ave Marias*] every day with threefold thought and meditation'.¹⁴

The mention of threefold thought and meditation confirms that 15th-century rosary devotion involved an exegetical project. More to the point, that exegetical task required that emotion and reason draw the chariot of the soul in tandem. This same model devout, for instance, tells us that '[...] in the first fifty *Ave Marias* think of the youth of Christ, during which he bore within his heart [foreknowledge of] his entire Passion. With the second fifty teach yourself how Christ's Passion according to his humanity truly happened. With the third fifty, teach yourself about Christ's Passion according to his divinity'.¹⁵ Each set of 50 *Ave Marias* will correspond to a set of *ghedencknissen*. And as James Marrow, among others, has demonstrated with respect to Passion imagery in general, vividness, memorability, and emotional charge were critical.¹⁶

Yet there is more to *ghedencknissen* than simply their emotional charge. The devout should not only respond emotionally, but also consider the narratives that provoke that response; she should 'teach herself', to quote the author, even as she imagines the unbearable suffering involved (the Passion as it occurred 'according to [Jesus's] humanity'). That is why, with each successive set of fifty *Ave Marias*, the interpretive process becomes more complex, more abstract, and, I might add, more difficult. This is necessarily the case, as that 15th-century author goes on to note, since the subject at hand is subtle and complex – nothing less, in fact, than the Trinity itself, comprising both divinity 'without end' (*sonder eynde*) and its fleshly manifestation, which 'had without doubt died' (*sonder twijvel ghestorven*).¹⁷ Devotional accomplishment at the close of the fifteenth century looked, in short, like something both heartfelt and thoughtful.

¹⁴ Ibidem 165: 'Ic lese alle daghe drie vrouwen crenzen mit drierhande aendachte ende overdenkinghe'.

¹⁵ Ibidem 170: 'Ende in die eerste vijftich *Ave Marien* peynsede si op die ioncheyt Christi, daer hi alle sijn passie doe drogede inder herten. Die ander vijftich las si om Christus passie in sijnre menscheit warachteliken geleden. Die derde vijftich las si om Christus passie na sijnre Godheyt'. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

¹⁶ Marrow J.H., *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study in the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk: 1979); Parshall P., "The Art of Memory and the Passion", *The Art Bulletin* 81, 3 (1999) 456–472.

¹⁷ De Boer, "De souter van Alanus de Rupe II" 170: 'Niet dat die Godheyt te liden hadde in hem selven, maer want die godheyt sonder eynde is, heeft die menschelike natuer also lief, als onse heer Ihesus dicwijl heeft gheopenbaert, dat is hadde si sterfeliken gheweest, si hadde sonder twijvel ghestorven'.

Thoughtfulness matters, because association governed the interpretive process, not only in the graduated complexity of devotional topics – from youth to adulthood and physical suffering, for example, or from foreknowledge to transcendence – but also in the underlying principle of conformity (*medevormigheid*, in Middle Dutch). As Reindert Falkenburg has pointed out, *medevormigheid* presumes interconnectedness among objects and ideas. That interconnectedness is not an iconographical principle, but rather an inherent quality – a Neoplatonic ‘consubstantiality’ to be detected and cultivated.¹⁸ The result is a kind of hermeneutic volatility, with objects awaiting the discernment of edifying correlations. Pictures facilitate this process by providing various prompts or guides to the recognition of proper conformity. For example, the roses on Abia’s sash would have prompted a recognition based at least partly in homophony, directing the viewer from visible *rosen* to the metaphorical *rosencrens* and, thence, *rosarium*.

At the same time, though, prompts or guides of this sort were spurs for what seems to have been frequently ambitious intellectual work. Indeed, devotional literature reveals the desire to pursue a complex interplay of ideas. Jesus, identified as Love, appears in one contemporaneous text as the wearer of a *rosenkrans*.¹⁹ Elsewhere, Mary is (among other things) a ‘precious red rose’, a ‘pure blossom’, ‘the rose of paradise’, and ‘an adorned rose’.²⁰ In another, she is a ‘purest blossom’ (*suer blome der reynicheit*) and the ‘flower of all fruitfulness’ (*bloem alder vruchtbaerheit*).²¹ One author describes her as the ‘Rose of Jericho’ (*rose van jherico*),²² while

¹⁸ Falkenburg R.L., “The Household of the Soul: Conformity in the *Merode Triptych*”, in Ainsworth M.W. (ed.), *Early Netherlandish Painting at the Crossroads: A Critical Look at Current Methodologies* (New York – New Haven: 2001), esp. 14.

¹⁹ Duyse F. van, *Het oude Nederlandsche lied* (The Hague: 1907) vol. III 2421: ‘Die minne heeft enen rosen crans [...]’. Cf. Bruning E. – et al., *Het geestelijk lied van Noord-Nederland in de vijftiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 1963) 275, verse 15; Falkenburg, “Household of the Soul” 8ff.

²⁰ Scheurleer D.F., *Een deuoot ende profityelck boecxken* (The Hague: 1889) 38: ‘[...] O weerde rose root / God groet v morgensterre / Een spiegel sonder smet / Die schoonste sonder merren / Reyn lēlie onbeulect / Maria edel sonne / Ick wil v gheuen prijs / Ghi sijt die suyver bloeme / Vercierende dat paradijs / God groet v keyserinne / Peerle der ioncfrouwen schoon / Ghi blinct ghelijck die sonne / Al in des hemels throon / Daer bistu wtuuercoren / Die spiegel al volmaect / Als een verchierde roose / Oock moeder ende maecht’. Cf. the transcription (from a different manuscript) in Van Duyse, *Het oude Nederlandsche lied*, vol. III 2504.

²¹ Bruning, *Het geestelijk lied* 182.

²² I follow the transcription of this incipit as provided in Bruin M. de – Oosterman J.B. – et al. (eds.), *Repertorium van het Nederlandse lied tot 1600, volume 1* (Ghent/Amsterdam: 2001) T1413. Cf. the transcription in Bruning, *Het geestelijk lied* 243 (‘Doe die rose van iherico’).

another refers to her as a both a pure blossom and the flowering of grace, which is immediately redefined as a 'noble seed'.²³ In the *Marien voerspan of sapeel*, which reworked Konrad von Würzburg's *Goldene Schmiede*, we read that Mary picks the roses of heaven,²⁴ and that one should regard her birth as the 'blossoming of untarnished virginity'.²⁵ Her honor, which comes from her virtue, is like a lush, green field, even as she herself is a wondrous blossom.²⁶ She is a beautiful and sweet smelling violet, because 'the precious violet is open to the sky and catches a heavenly morning dew'.²⁷ Turned heavenward, she alone is prepared to receive divine favor. She is the mandrake, noblest of flowers; she is muscat, lily.²⁸

No less important, this fecund spiritual landscape was anything but serene. To be sure, as its title suggests, the *Marien voerspan of sapeel* – 'Mary's Necklace or Chaplet' – categorizes prayers as courtly gifts.²⁹ These offerings are meant to cultivate gestures in kind, which the text calls both *bloemen* and *cransen*.³⁰ However, gifts of this sort inevitably come at a cost. We read elsewhere that the *crans* is also Christ's crown of thorns. Another Middle Dutch poem declares that, 'On the head of my beloved [sc. Christ as bridegroom] there sits a crown, and that crown is ornamented with his noble blood'.³¹ The components of the chaplet have been transformed from flowers into blood-soaked thorns, which nonetheless retain their original floral implications. This redescribed crown of thorns

²³ Bruning, *Het geestelijk lied* 180–181: 'Fonteyne, moeder, maghet reyne, / bloem der ghenaden, edel greyne / laet ons di louen talder tijt [...] Nu laet ons oec die zuuer bloeme / louen end dancken sonder roeme / want daer af coemt ons groet profijt'.

²⁴ Moschall J., *Marien voerspan of sapeel: eine mittelniederländische Bearbeitung der „Goldenen Schmiede“ des Konrad von Würzburg* (Erlangen: 1983) 15: 'Daer plucstu af die hemelroesen'. See also Meertens M., 'Een Middelnederlandsche bewerking der 'Goldne Schmiede'', *Ons geestelijk erf* 18, 1 (1944) 35–47.

²⁵ Moschall, *Marien voerspan of sapeel* 25: 'Alsoe sietmen daerte ioncfrouwe in dijn gheboert die bloeme der meechdelicheit ongetst'.

²⁶ Ibidem 57: 'Dijn ere is als der groen ewerten / ende als een welgebloemde waese ende mersche. [...] Du schoene weechs bloemelijn'.

²⁷ Ibidem 59: 'Du beste der sueter fyolen busche / schoen van verwen suete van roke / Dat fioel bloemken is boven open / ende daer valt smorgens den hemelschen doue'.

²⁸ Ibidem 61 and 63, respectively.

²⁹ Ibidem 9–11 and 116–118.

³⁰ Ibidem 15: 'Des sal dijn hant hem bloemen geven aen haren sapeelen ende cransen'.

³¹ Hoffmann von Fallersleben A.H., *Niederländische geistliche Lieder des XV. Jahrhunderts* (Hannover: 1854) 186: 'Ghelovet sijstu cederboom' (Praised be you, cedar-tree), which includes the lines 'Op mines lieves hove / daer staet een crenselkijn, / dat crenselijn is bedouwet / mitten edelen bloede sijn'. Cf. the incipit provided in de Bruin – Oosterman – et al., *Repertorium I* 1191.

subsequently becomes the seed of love in the devout soul: '[...] [W]ere my heart a garden of noble flowers, I would plant my beloved's crown therein'.³²

For viewers raised in this tradition, the Tree of Jesse would never have been all that far from supposedly more 'sober and contemplative' topics, such as Geertgen tot Sint Jans's *Man of Sorrows*, another notable Haarlem monument [Fig. 3].³³ Thanks to the hermeneutic volatility both of Abia's roses and of the rosary itself – thanks, that is, to their *medevormigheid* – the Amsterdam painting would have activated comparable, potentially even more violent and memorable images. And it would have done so because rosary devotion required that one pursue that activation on a more or less regular basis. In this respect, the Amsterdam painting evinces a peculiar case of what Peter Parshall has called 'antirepresentational' imagery, that is, an imagery designed for mental augmentation by the viewer. It is peculiar insofar as that augmentation takes us not from one Passion scene to another, but rather from one Scriptural reference to another, from one topic to another, from one mood to another, and from one concept to another. But this brings me to the crux of the matter: to view the Amsterdam Tree of Jesse effectively, one had to exercise a measure of visual wit, beginning with depicted subject matter and moving subsequently into rougher, and tougher, hermeneutic territory.

Such movement was subject to qualitative judgment beyond the selection of fitting subjects (i.e., the basic discernment of *medevormigheid*). The 1487 *Hoofkijn van deuotien*, a reworking of Pierre D'Ailly's *Jardin amoureux de l'ame* ('Love Garden of the Soul'), makes this clear in a dialogue between the Soul and Reason.³⁴ After prolonged discussion and protracted effort, the Soul eventually makes a *cransken* from its prayers. Interestingly, the text describes that *cransken* as very beautiful and delicate or simple (*seer schoo[n] en[de] gracelic*). Devotion undergoes appraisal of a fairly refined

³² Hoffmann von Fallersleben, *Niederländische geistliche Lieder* 186: 'Och waer mijn herte een gaerden / van edelen bloemekijn, / so woudic daer in planten / mijns lieven crenselijn'. For more on the rose-garden of the soul, see Schmidtke D., *Studien zur dingallegorischen Erbauungsliteratur im Mittelalter. Am Beispiel der Gartenallegorie* (Tübingen: 1982) 74–87, 101–156, and 393–445; Falkenburg, *Fruit of Devotion* 20–55.

³³ On the empathic functions of this painting, see most recently Decker J.R., *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2009) 67ff. On empathy and imagery in general, see Ringbom S., *Icon to Narrative. The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting*, rev. ed. (Doornspijk: 1984), esp. 11–22.

³⁴ For more on this text, see Ampe A., 'Het Hofken van devocien,' *Ons geestelijk erf* 30, 1 (1956) 43–82.



Fig. 3. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *Man of Sorrows* (ca. 1495). Oil on panel, 26.2 × 25.2 cm. Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent.

sort: that *cransken* is not simply beautiful, it is *very* beautiful; and it is not just very beautiful, it is very beautiful *and delicate or simple*. That is, the product of the Soul's labor turns out to be attractive as well as properly fashioned. Prayer and meditation take the form of art, presuming all the while an audience for which refined craft and restrained, purposeful ornamentation are ideal.

It is difficult not to think of the Amsterdam Tree of Jesse in similar terms. For instance, though the painting offers a dense and complicated set of subjects, a kind of simplicity undergirds its syntax, most notably in the repetition and variation of poses among the Kings of Judea. By repeating and varying poses, the painter of the Tree of Jesse provides visual *medevormigheid*, which lends itself to exegetical interpretation, with various

kings connecting now through resemblance, now through contrast, and so forth. In this regard, that visual strategy would have been pleasing in its own right, but it also would have been pleasing because its visible beauty lends to a greater, specifically spiritual sort of beauty that derives from interpolative understanding.

Capitalizing fully on such cues would have been difficult, because this approach to interpretation presumes a command of, among other things, memorization, visualization, organization, and abstraction. The *Hoofkijn van deuotien*, for instance, describes the proper spiritual path as 'hard or trying to comprehend' ('hart of scerp daer af te hoorene spreken'), and 'even more trying to tread' ('ende noch vele scarper is hy om te wandelen').³⁵ This difficulty has many sources, but the most important for my purposes is a discrepancy between the task at hand and one's ability to complete it. Ideally one would have trained that ability from an early age. Even so, some were deemed more capable than others. One later-fifteenth century treatise recounts the story of a nun who had enjoyed some degree of accomplishment with the rosary before joining her order. Upon taking vows, obedience to them led her to be 'very distracted and disturbed in her heart'. The author of the treatise rules out simple laziness, ascribing the woman's troubles to a combination of distraction and discouragement. Ultimately, divine intervention proved necessary. One day, as the nun was praying,

[T]he Virgin Mary showed her a way, saying, 'you do not know what you read. Your heart is not in this as it ought to be. If you wish to do this well for me, fortify your heart against external things [sc., the nun's mundane obligations]. And if you are unable to recite the whole rosary, then read half. And if you still cannot do it, say one quarter or less [...].'³⁶

As so many early authorities on devotion argued, mere recitation is insufficient; devotion demands muscular mental engagement in the form of discernment coupled with skillful interpretation. Hence, the less capable

³⁵ *Hoofkijn van deuotien* 22v.

³⁶ De Boer, "De souter van Alanus de Rupe II" 159–160: 'Een nonne was devoet om te lesen den souter des magets Marie. Daerna creech si doer die ghehoersaemheit een dienst in welken si zeer onledich was ende verstroyt van herten. Nochtans las si, al wast haestelic ende mit vertoghen herten. Welcke die maghet Marie een reyse openbaerde, als si biddende was voer den outaer, seggende: Du en weetste niet, watstu leeste. Dijn herte en is niet in dit alset plach te sijn. Maer wilstu mi dit wel doen, so vergader dijn herte van uutwendighen dinghen. Ende moghestu alle den souter niet lesen ghehele, so leset die helfte. Ende is datstu dat noch niet doen en moghete, segghe dat vierdendele of noch minne [...].'

should scale down their exercises in order to maximize the impact of what skills they do possess. Quality of execution trumps quantity.

But what exactly constitutes quality? How does one go about crafting a suitably beautiful and delicate *cransken*? There is no single answer, but some issues do stand out. Part of devotional accomplishment entails emotional investment: the nun had become distracted, going about her recitation mechanically and, thus, poorly. Her heart, as the story says, was 'not in this'. That matters, for to feel deeply is to enact contrition and thus live devotion, rather than merely thinking it. Lieven Bouwens made this explicit in his 1509 *Meditacien op den rosenkrans van onser liever vrouwen* ('Meditation on the Rosary of Our Beloved Lady'), which provided *ghedencknissen* so that the reader might 'keep them firmly in the heart and, with each of 10 Ave Marias, think about them'.³⁷

Note, however, that Bouwens also stresses the need to employ reason, to 'think about' *ghedencknissen* (he uses the phrase 'ende daerop peynsende'). To anchor images in the heart is not sufficient. One must subsequently validate those images by putting them to work. Firm retention and deep feeling mean little in the absence of cogitation, which requires concentration and careful thought. Think again of the story of the distracted nun. Shrewd indeed is the recommendation that she reduce the scale of her rosary exercises, for that reduction will allow her both to anchor what remains more firmly and to parse that material more fully. That is why, in the same text, the author declares that we should, 'Learn not only the sum [*ghetale*] you should pray [*betalen*, lit. 'pay'], but also with what meditation you can make that [prayer] most useful [*oerbarlicste*]'.³⁸ The language of cost-benefit analysis (sum, payment, utility) is especially interesting here, since it speaks to the value judgments that attended private devotion: some kinds were simply better than others. They were the kinds in which both emotion and reason were as fully engaged as possible, even if that meant reducing the volume of material with which one engaged.

For the early modern devout, the difficulty of a religious project helped generate its value. Jean Gerson voiced a common complaint when he castigated '[...] the person who, because she considers devotion difficult to

³⁷ De Boer, "De souter van Alanus de Rupe IV" 185: 'Ende dese vijftig articulen en sijn niet alleene gheordineert, omdat men se lesen soude, mer omdat men se vaste int herte hebben soude ende daerop peynsende, die maghet Maria met dien X Ave Maria groeten soude'.

³⁸ De Boer, "De souter van Alanus de Rupe II" 165: 'Leert niet alleen mit wat ghetale gy dat moet betalen, mer mit wat aendachte dat ghy u dat alder oerbarlicste maket'.

attain, places before her view any holy doctrine or the life of a saint, and thus easily provides herself with comfort and no longer meditates upon the goodness of God without an intervening medium'.³⁹ What matters here is not Gerson's grudging allowance of imagery and other aids to religious practice. Rather, it is the way he criticizes the ornamental or unreflective use of such imagery. The problem lies with the tendency of the post-lapsarian soul to use that image as a palliative rather than a spur. For Gerson, as indeed for Bouwens, visual aids should promote spiritual effort, not emotional comfort. To paraphrase a more modern declaration, one chose to pursue meditation not because it was easy but because it was hard. But difficulty was weighed against the benefits it yielded, and when the relationship became disproportionate the former (difficulty) had to be mitigated. Thus, one also pursued devotional difficulty *only insofar as it was smart* – i.e., both emotionally charged and intellectually accessible. And this, in the case of the distracted nun, meant modifying her practice until it resided just within the limits of her skill set.

Volume and complexity constituted one type of challenge; the selection of suitable images constituted another. Some people seem to have been fairly good at the latter. The model devout I discussed earlier, the one who recites the rosary in full and with a complete set of *gedencknissen*, recommends praying before readily available images.⁴⁰ Interestingly, he uses the term *gemaecte beelden* – 'manufactured images' – a term that differentiates such images from other, specifically mental pictures. The presumption here is that one will approach paintings, prints, or sculpted images as opportunities to interpolate. Thus, qualitative differentiation occurs not with respect to whether one uses manufactured images in the first place, but rather with respect to how effectively one does so. The temptation is simply to look, but effective use goes beyond that, looking (literally) for the most effective way to pay what one owes. That is one of the reasons mentorship was crucial for maximizing devotional skill. Even the talented devout could become lazy or overestimate her capabilities.⁴¹

³⁹ Gerson J., *Œuvres complètes*, VII, ed. P. Glorieux (Paris: 1968) 24: 'Et congnois la personne que puisque elle regarde soi estre dure a avoir devotion, se met a regarder aulcune bonne doctrine ou vie d'un saint ou sainte et asses legierement se sent avoir doulceur, et plus tost que s'elle s'efforçoit de penser a la bonté de Dieu sans aultre moyen'.

⁴⁰ De Boer, "De souter van Alanus de Rupe II" 168: 'De derden crense lese ic voer sonderlinghe outaren ende gemaecte beelden in der kercken of binnen huse [...]'.
⁴¹ See, for instance, Geert Grote's remarks on the topic in Engen J. van, *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings* (New York/Mahwah: 1988) 103 and 108–109.

Of course, refining those capabilities is one thing, depicting that refinement is another. The nun in the Amsterdam *Tree of Jesse*, for instance, provides an exemplar of proper rosary devotion, not least its potential complexity and subtlety, but she does so in conjunction with the man at right. He, for his part, exemplifies someone in command of the written word and its proper uses. Their relationship is pragmatic, with a more seasoned member of the interpretive community guiding his charge through both the substance and the mechanics of acceptable interpretation.⁴² Consequently, the painting offers us a gradient of capabilities – not just a difference, but one imbued with a sense of degree or measure: she is less accomplished than he, but her comportment and proximity to him suggest a pedagogical relationship in which that difference may change over time. Thus, the Amsterdam painting emphasizes a spectrum of skills to be noted, appraised, sought, and refined to the best of one's abilities.

Unsurprisingly, the interest in differing degrees of religious accomplishment correlated with authority. Consider, for example, a panel depicting the Cistercian abbess Jeanne de Boubais and dating from the first decade or so of the sixteenth century [Fig. 4]. In the foreground, the abbess kneels in prayer before a ciborium; through a window to the right of her we see a bedroom in which one nun reads by another window while a second looks on. The result neatly expresses ideal Netherlandish female devotion ca. 1510. The most familiar aspect of that ideal is, perhaps, the abbess's embodiment of Eucharistic piety in the foreground.⁴³ However, this panel is more than simply a pictorial declaration of accomplishment by Jeanne de Boubais. It is also a study in the effort required to achieve that status. The background attends to the logistics of religious socialization: a clock ensures the regular performance of hours, while one nun oversees the *lectio divina* of her sister.⁴⁴ Once again the relationship is pedagogical, once again it expresses a range of capabilities, and once again it plays on a set

⁴² This dynamic is especially interesting in light of efforts to regulate individual piety during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With regard to women's religious communities in the Low Countries it seems to have involved an effort to promote asceticism over its less tractable counterpart, mysticism. See Scheepsma W., *Demoed en devotie. De koorvrouwen van Windesheim en hun geschriften* (Amsterdam: 1997) 79ff.

⁴³ For more on the topic, see Pearson A.G., *Envisioning Gender in Burgundian Devotional Art, 1350–1530: Experience, Authority, Resistance* (Aldershot – Burlington: 2005) 136ff.

⁴⁴ See Scheepsma, *Demoed en devotie* 75–80 and, more generally, Goossens M., *De meditatie in de eerste tijd van de Moderne Devotie* (Haarlem: 1952).



Fig. 4. Jean Bellegame, *Abbess Jeanne de Boubais* (after 1507). Oil on panel, 40.32 × 25.4 cm. Pittsburgh, Frick Art & Historical Center.

of qualitative judgments that obtain with respect to private devotional practice.⁴⁵

Indeed, qualitative judgment was a critical aspect of life for religious women in the early modern Low Countries. This comes through quite clearly in sisterbooks (*zusterboeken*), or *vitae* that various communities produced.⁴⁶ One example, from the Meester-Geertshuis at Deventer, opens thus:

Here follow some of the edifying points of our older sisters. It is good to hold their lives before our eyes, for their ways were truly like a candle on a candlestick, casting light upon all those in the house. The light fell not only

⁴⁵ Such judgments would also have applied to the interior of the diptych, which depicts the Virgin and Child opposite a Carthusian monk accompanied by St. Bernard of Clairvaux. It is unclear, however, whether the current relationship between interior and exterior of this diptych is original or the result of later modification. Thus, exact nature of those judgments is hard to assess. For a survey of the relationship between the interior and exterior of the Pittsburgh diptych, see Hand J.O. – Metzger C.A. – Spronk R., *Prayers and Portraits. Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych* (New Haven: 2006) 30–35.

⁴⁶ Scheepsma, *Demoed en devotie* 121–152.

upon those in this house but also upon all who saw their ways and with whom they spoke.⁴⁷

No less important, the biographies were expected to illustrate a range of responses to life in the community: '[...] [A]s they were illumined, so they continued to illumine others, one in obedience, another in humility, a third in resignation, and a fourth in sisterly love, while the others seemed devoured by the earnestness of the house of God (see Ps68/69:10)'.⁴⁸ Readers were expected to appraise the quality of the lives recounted in this text just as they would have the behavior of their contemporaries: '[...] [W]hat they were in the eyes of God was evident from the fruits they produced, for from the fruit the tree is known (see Mt 12:33)'.⁴⁹ Far from ornamental, the qualitative judgment of piety was a necessity.

The Deventer biographies attend to cases of putative failure as well as success. The story of Fye Vreysen (d. 1454) is a case in point. Things started out promisingly: she was diligent, affable, and a solid member of the community. For a time she proved exemplary, shoring up the work of those less capable.⁵⁰ However, a visit outside the community proved disastrous because sister Vreysen 'was still young and had not visited much in the world, and the flesh and the devil and the world can prove very distracting from the good'.⁵¹ Upon returning to Deventer, she was incapable of preventing or managing these distractions. Consequently, 'she became progressively sick in the body and declined from day to day until she finally died'.⁵² Sister Vreysen's narrative is about more than infernal meddling. It is also about outstripping one's spiritual capabilities, and thus her story serves as a warning to community members, a reminder to keep a close eye on what they can and cannot manage.

Life at Deventer was not the only difficult thing, it turns out. The process of detecting spiritual accomplishment could be hard as well. The prologue notes, for instance, that some of the women it describes were, '[...] so secretive and hidden in their virtuous ways that they seemed almost to 'steal' virtues. At times they did all they could of humble and lowly work without sinning, even while they kept hidden and secret to themselves their grace and good works, so it could be said of them, "The beauty of

⁴⁷ Translated by van Engen, *Devotio moderna* 121.

⁴⁸ Ibidem 121–122.

⁴⁹ Ibidem 121

⁵⁰ Ibidem 131.

⁵¹ Ibidem 131.

⁵² Ibidem 131.

the daughter of the king is already within them" (Ps 4/45:14).⁵³ Virtuous behavior was not simply held in high esteem, it was also treated as an occasionally subtle phenomenon to be detected and appraised in one's peers.

According to the *zusterboeken*, these women were not created equal. The prologue of the biographies, for instance, notes that God endowed them 'according to his good pleasure and their own natures and according to the degree that each in her youth had applied force and piously resisted evil desire'. Each woman's 'own nature' – i.e., her particular skill set and attitudes – played a significant role, being either enhanced by effort or eroded by neglect. The end result is, tellingly, a person whose behavior in the present speaks volumes about her past: '[Y]ou can be sure that those who were outstanding in virtue in their later years had brought considerable force to bear upon themselves in their youth [...]'.⁵⁴ Thus, the Deventer biographies speak to a community in which people observed one another, gauging relative moral worth as a measure of accomplishment, looking for only occasionally visible indications of capability and training.

In this context, I am inclined to think of the two portraits in the Amsterdam *Tree of Jesse* as both admonitory and, in some respects, *competitive*. The former quality is most apparent in the opportunities the painting provides for interpolation. Less immediately apparent, but no less important, is the competitive function of the portraits. Each contemporaneous figure stands as an avatar of accomplishment. The nun provides an exemplar of proper rosary devotion, in all its potential complexity and subtlety, while the man at right exemplifies the role of a pious chaperon. Accordingly, we are presented with a hierarchy of skills – she is less accomplished than he – that raises a question: how accomplished are we?

This brings me back to my initial question: how might devotional accomplishment have looked in the fifteenth century? The question has two answers. One answer is relatively simple and metaphorical, and it pertains to recognizable behaviors. How might devotional accomplishment have looked in, say, a Haarlem convent? It would have looked like that nun; that is, it would have expressed key visual traits – habit, rosary, posture, and of course a detectable dedication to matters religious. But, her appearance did not constitute the whole of her depicted persona. That

⁵³ Ibidem 122.

⁵⁴ Ibidem 122.

association with matters religious necessarily also would have recalled and activated a complex mental set attuned to expressions of both emotion and reason. That is, by referring to the rosary as an aspect of ideal devotion the painting would both have encouraged that devotion in the viewer, sparking the desire to generate one's own *seer schoon ende gracelic cransken*. The devotional portrait is, in other words, a provocation to enact such accomplishment. Herein lies the answer to the literal, more complex sense of my question, which has to do with behaviors and sensitivities on the part of a contemporaneous viewer. Devotional accomplishment would once again have looked like the portrait of the nun, or at least it would have looked at the world in the manner to which that portrait lays claim: devout, thorough, pragmatic, emotionally engaged, intellectually sound, and above all discerning. That is, it would have looked at the world in a sensitive, highly sophisticated, perhaps in some sense even witty way.

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MEDITATIVE EXEGESIS AND THE TROPE OF CONVERSION IN DIRK VELLERT'S *CALLING OF PETER AND ANDREW* OF 1523

Walter S. Melion

Dirk Vellert's engraving *The Calling of Peter and Andrew*, signed and dated 1523. MEY. 30., portrays the scriptural subject jointly associated with the Feast of St. Andrew (November 30th in the *Sanctorale*) and Advent Sunday, the beginning of the liturgical calendar, in the *Breviarium Romanum* [Fig. 1].¹ In the Roman usage, later codified by the Council of Trent, the propinquity of the feastday to Advent encourages the votary to draw a parallel between the start of Andrew's (and Peter's) discipleship and the start of the church year, when one's faith is as if reborn. The coming of Christ to the fishers Andrew and Peter by the sea of Galilee is compared to the mystery of the Incarnation, the source of the new dispensation that makes possible the founding of the Church: 'Matins. First Nocturne. First Antiphon: The Lord saw Peter and Andrew, and He called them. [...] First Lesson (Romans 10:4–8): Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth these things shall live in it. But the righteousness which is of the faith speaketh on this wise: [...] The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart'.²

The *Roman Breviary* also recalls that it was Andrew who, imitating Jesus's earlier call to him – 'Come and see' (*John* 1:39) – presently called his brother Peter to do the same, leading him to the Messiah, whom their

¹ On *The Calling of Peter and Andrew*, see Luijten G. – Schuckman C. (comps.), *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, ca. 1450–1700. Volume XXXIII: Jan van de Velde II to Dirk Vellert*, ed. D. de Hoop Scheffer (Roosendaal: 1989) 190, no. 3; Konowitz E., "The Glass Designer Dierick Vellert", in Raguin V. C. (ed.), *Northern Renaissance Stained Glass: Continuity and Transformations* [exh. cat., Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Art Gallery, College of the Holy Cross,] (Worcester, Mass.: 1987) 23, note 17; and eadem, *Dirk Jacobsz. Vellert: A Study of his Stained Glass Windows, Drawings, and Prints* (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University: 1992) 103, 249–251.

² *The Roman Breviary: Reformed by Order of the Holy OEcumenical Council of Trent. Vol. 1*, trans. John, Marquess of Bute (Edinburgh: 1879) 927–928. On the Divine Office before and after the Tridentine Reform, see Harper J., *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford: 1991) 73–108, 155–161.



Fig. 1. Dirk Vellert, *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (30 May 1523). Engraving, 14.8 × 11.0 cm. London, British Museum.

former master, John the Baptist, had identified as the Savior (*John* 1:36): 'Fourth Lesson: [...] He was a disciple of John the Baptist, and heard him say of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God", whereupon he immediately followed Jesus, bringing his brother also with him'.³ Finally, the *Breviary* repeatedly emphasizes that the calling of Andrew and Peter inaugurates

³ *Roman Breviary* 929.

the apostolic vocation of preaching, bodied forth by Christ himself, in imitation of whom his ministers promulgate the Word and propagate the Church. In choosing fishermen to follow him, Christ was urging them to trade or, better, transpose occupations, converting fishing into preaching, nets into the Gospel, and trawling for fish into trawling for men. The *Breviary* returns again and again to this analogy, drawn from *Matthew* 4:19, *Mark* 1:17, and *Luke* 5:10, about which I shall have more to say anon: 'First Responsory: The Lord, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw Peter and Andrew casting their nets into the sea, and He called them saying: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men". [...] Second Lesson (*Joel* 2:32): And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written (*Isaiah* 52:7): How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!'⁴

Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* implicitly alludes to another complementary episode that likewise takes place on the sea of Galilee, the calling of Peter, chief witness of the miraculous draught of fishes, commemorated on the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost in the *Missale Romanum*. In this liturgical context, the calling of Peter, as described in the pericope (*Luke* 5:1–11, specifically 5:10), exemplifies the conferral of spiritual sight, when the eyes of the spirit, having been opened, become capable of envisioning Christ. Both the Introit, 'The Lord is my light', and the Offertory Prayer, 'Enlighten my eyes', respectively taken from *Psalms* 26 and 12, make reference to the eyes of the spirit, while the Epistle (*Romans* 8:18–23) contrasts the servitude, under which we labor in this life, to the glory that 'shall be revealed to us', when liberated by faith in Christ, we become the 'children of God'.⁵ The Versicle that prefaces the Gospel brings to mind an image of Peter, along with his associates – Andrew, James, and John – all of whom were humble fishermen, for it invokes God for divine assistance, entreating him to become present as a refuge to the 'poor in distress'.⁶ Indeed, the imagery of the Missal, like that of the *Breviary*, is perfectly consonant with Vellert's print, which could easily function as an illustration to either prayerbook.

⁴ Ibidem 928.

⁵ *The Roman Missal, Translated into the English Language for the Use of the Laity* (Philadelphia: 1861) 402–404. On the order of the Mass before and after the Tridentine Reform, see Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy* 109–126, 161–165.

⁶ *Roman Missal* 403.

But that would be to simplify what Vellert has done, since in fact, he reconciles the two episodes by explicitly portraying neither the one nor the other: even while showing how Jesus summons Peter and Andrew from the shore, as recounted in *Matthew* 4:18–20 and *Mark* 1:16–18, he chooses a moment specified by neither evangelist, just before Andrew catches sight of the Lord; he thus privileges the response of Peter, who alone reacts to the summons, looks up from his fishing, and gazes directly at Christ [Fig. 1]. In shifting attention from one occupation to another, from his nets to a new calling, Peter evokes *Luke* 5:8–10, where, as a consequence of seeing the draught of fishes, he departs from his fellows and their catch and resolutely focuses on Christ, whom he acknowledges as divine, as if observing him for the first time truly. And in giving priority to Peter, Vellert subtly adverts to *John* 1:41–42, yet another early episode of interaction between Jesus and Simon, as Peter was previously known: soon after he first meets Christ, Simon is told that he shall be renamed Cephas, that is, Petrus (Rock), an allusion to the ardency and steadfastness he would later exhibit as a follower of Christ. That Vellert's Peter is the first of the brothers to transfer attention to Jesus, connotes the strength of his attachment that will soon occasion a change of name and renewal of identity.

There are several other respects in which Vellert's print is distinctive, not least the curious attitude of Christ. Whereas his head is shown in profile, as if silhouetted, an effect enhanced by the foreshortened side-view of the cruciform halo, seen *di sotto in su*, his torso is instead posed in three-quarter view. The effect is suggestive of turning: Christ would seem to be swiveling from one position to another, the former orientation indicated by his left foot, which points slightly out of the image; his torso continues this motion, pivoting farther in the direction of Peter and Andrew; his head, turned sideways and clearly outlined, moves that much farther again toward them. With his left hand, he lifts his robe to facilitate this rotation from left to right that extends *a centro usque ad caelum*. Although on the plane of the image his line of sight intersects with that of Peter, in space he does not look at him directly; rather, he appears to look downward, his gaze, to the extent it is discernible, interiorly focused. The details of the eye, though only vaguely expressed, give the impression that Christ is deep in thought, and his lips, very slightly parted, imply that he has already begun to speak.

Jesus executes with his right hand the priestly gesture of benediction associated with the sign of the cross, thus implying the sacredness of the vocation to which Peter is called. This same gesture appears in Vellert's *Christ Walking on Water*, signed and dated 1525. DESs. 30. [Fig. 2], where it



Fig. 2. Dirk Vellert, *Christ Walking on the Water* (30 December 1525). Engraving, 15.3 × 11.2 cm. London, British Museum.

signifies the admonition delivered to Peter, whom Jesus saves from sinking (*Matthew* 14:31): 'O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?'⁷ In the *Calling of the Peter and Andrew*, the gesture can be seen to convey that Christ is urging Peter to embrace the new vocation he proffers – that of preacher (a point underscored in the *Breviary*). In calling Peter, Jesus himself epitomizes what preaching entails, for the preacher strives first and foremost to convert his auditors; more to the point, as we shall see, the preacher persuades by utilizing similitudes, such as the analogy of fishing and fishing for men. Christ's admonitory gesture can be read as a call to follow him in preaching *per analogiam*. The gesture appears yet again, its function altered, in Vellert's *St. Luke Painting the Virgin and Child*, signed and dated 1526. *IN IVLI*. 28.: here it belongs to the painter Luke, whose right hand rests on a maulstick, the index and middle fingers extended to guide his eyes and brush [Fig. 3].⁸ In this context, the gesture is instrumental as well as denotative, in that it betokens the action of fashioning a sacred image. We might discern its significance in the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, as follows: Christ the preacher is fashioning an analogical image – that of fishing for men – the function of which is to frame a novel enterprise in persuasively familiar terms. As Peter and Andrew have cast their nets, so Jesus, in attempting to 'catch' the two men, puts forth an image of casting: Jesus casts this image to win them over to the evangelical vocation he enacts for their benefit. His pregnant gesture is therefore multifunctional: benedictory, instructive, admonitory, analogical, and, in the rhetorical sense summarized above, representational.

Vellert's inventive design is his response to a subject whose iconography was notably fluid. The calling of Peter and Andrew occasionally appears in manuscript breviaries, missals, and antiphonaries, where it accompanies the rubric 'Secundum Matthaeum', referring to the episode described in *Matthew* 4:18–20: 'And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And he saith to them: Come ye after me,

⁷ On *Christ Walking on the Water*, see Luijten – Schuckman (comps.), *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts XXXIII* 191, no. 4; Boon K.G., *Netherlandish Drawings of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (The Hague: 1978) I 68, no. 458, II 172; and Konowitz Dirk Jacobsz. *Vellert* 103–104, 251–252. Unless otherwise indicated, scriptural passages are quoted from *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate (Douay Rheims Version)*, ed. R. Challoner (Baltimore: 1899).

⁸ On *St. Luke Painting the Virgin and Child*, see Luijten – Schuckman (comps.), *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts XXXIII* 196–197, no. 9; and Konowitz Dirk Jacobsz. *Vellert* 91, 105–106, 257–258.



Fig. 3. Dirk Vellert, *St. Luke Painting the Virgin and Child* (28 July 1526). Engraving, 16.9 × 12.1 cm. London, British Museum.

and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him'. In a Provençal missal of ca. 1475–85, illuminated by the Master of the Della Rovere Missals (Morgan Library, M.306, fol. 27 recto), the *Calling of Peter and Andrew* commemorates the Feast of St. Andrew in the Temporal-Sanctorale [Fig. 4]. Jesus executes a compound movement: he turns toward the brothers, whom he is calling, but also away from them, as he walks and gestures out of the image, beckoning Peter and Andrew to follow him on his way throughout Galilee. Both of them stare at Christ, although Peter, shown in profile, seems to gaze more intently, and it is he who guides the boat shoreward, as if the decision to follow were primarily his. Beside Peter and Andrew, the letter I takes the form of a column that marks the threshold – of time and place ('In illo tempore'), but also experience – beyond which, in choosing their new vocation, they are about to travel. In the *Franconian Gradual of St. Lorenz, Nuremberg*, illuminated by Jacob Elsner between 1507 and 1510, the *Calling of Peter and Andrew* marks the Introit for the Vigil of Apostle Andrew (Morgan Library, M.905, II fol. 1 recto) [Fig. 5]. Now it is Andrew who receives pride of place: positioned between Jesus and Peter, he imitates his new master, staring down, like him, at the net that his brother hauls in, so that he, not Peter, bears witness to the analogy drawn by Jesus and, in response, steers the boat toward shore. That the scene unfolds within the capital D of Dominus ('Dominus secus mare Galilee vidit duos fratres Petrum et Andream'), its lineaments harmonized to the shape of the letter, suggests that Andrew, in following Christ, conforms to the will of the Lord and is in this sense encompassed by him.

Flemish missals are equally varied: produced in Bruges ca. 1420, the *Calling of Peter and Andrew* by a master of the Gold Scrolls Group attaches to the Introit for the Vigil of Apostle Andrew (Morgan Library, M.374, fol. 115 verso) [Fig. 6]. Having chosen to follow Christ, the two brothers process toward him and genuflect, Peter foremost; with his hands, formerly used to clasp nets, he now enfolds the Lord's left hand, in what may perhaps be construed as a gesture of fealty. By contrast, the miniature illustrating the Gospel pericope for the Feast of Apostle Andrew in a Paduan-Venetan Lectionary, dated 1436, portrays Peter and Andrew preoccupied with their catch, as yet unaware that Christ is present (Morgan Library, M.180, fol. 105 recto) [Fig. 7]. In the distance, they are shown again, this time after their conversion, walking side by side with Jesus. Another variation occurs in the *Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal*, possibly illuminated by Alexander Bening ca. 1500–1510: the Feast of the Apostle Andrew is illustrated by Luke 5:8–10 rather than *Matthew* 4:18–20 (Morgan Library, M.52, fol. 345 verso)



Fig. 4. [COL. PL. 7] Master of the Della Rovere Missals, *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (ca. 1475–1485). Illuminated initial I from manuscript *Missale*, fol. 27r. New York, Morgan Library M.306.



Fig. 5. [COL. PL. 8] Jacob Elsner, *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (1507–1510). Illuminated initial D from manuscript *Graduale Sancti Laurentii*, II, fol. 1r. New York, Morgan Library M.905.

[Fig. 8]. Impelled by the miracle he has just witnessed, Peter, his feet still submerged, rushes to kneel before Christ, who is also closely watched by James and John; Peter's hands enfold the right hand of Jesus, his gesture and pose reminiscent of the Matthean scene of calling in the Paduan-Venetan Lectionary. The substitution of the Lucan version for that in Matthew provides a precedent for the artfully implied blending of these episodes in Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew*.

Whereas the calling of Peter and Andrew appears with some frequency in the manuscript tradition, it was, before Vellert, rarely chosen as a print subject. Excerpted from an unidentified missal, Hans Wechtlin's *Calling of Andrew*, dated 1508, demonstrates how susceptible to pictorial modification the subject could be [Fig. 9]. Since *Matthew* 4:18 and *Mark* 1:16 state that Jesus saw both brothers fishing and called both of them, adding simply by way of conclusion that they followed him, Wechtlin has taken the liberty of placing Andrew before Peter. He surely did this on the authority of *John* 1:40, which identifies Andrew as the first of John the Baptist's disciples to follow Christ. Peter looks on from the boat behind Andrew's, and just beyond, John the Evangelist watches from his boat, while his brother James pulls in their net. Wechtlin includes John and



Fig. 6. Master of the Gold Scrolls Group, *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (ca. 1420). Illuminated 'Introit' from manuscript *Missale*, fol. 115v. New York, Morgan Library M.374.

James since according to *Matthew* 4:21, they were the next two brethren Jesus encountered by the sea of Galilee. However, he also incorporates elements, such as the nets heavy-laden with fish, that seem to allude to *Luke* 5:6: 'And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes'. And he juxtaposes this reference to the miraculous draught

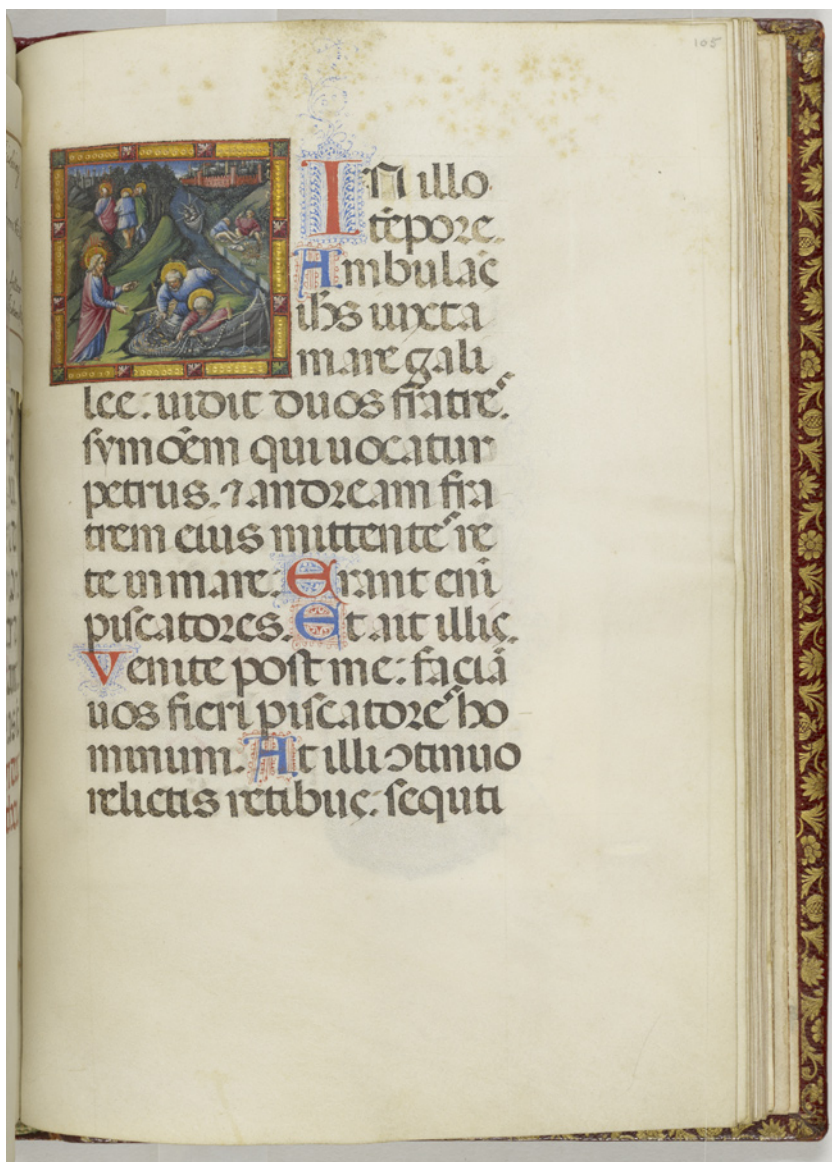


Fig. 7. Paduan-Venetian Master, *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (1436). Illuminated 'Incipit' from manuscript *Lectionarium*, fol. 105r. New York, Morgan Library M.180.



Fig. 8. [COL. PL. 9] Alexander Bening [Master of the Older Prayerbook of Maximilian], *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (ca. 1500–1510). Illuminated 'Incipit' from manuscript *Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal*, fol. 345v. New York, Morgan Library M.52.



Fig. 9. Hans Wechtlin, *Calling of Andrew; Peter, James, and John Fishing; Marriage Feast at Cana* (1508). Woodcut, 21.8 × 16.8 cm. Illustration from unidentified German *Meßbuch*. London, British Museum.

of fishes, with background scenes of the miracle at Cana, thereby implying that Andrew's show of faith and transformation into disciple of Christ itself qualifies as miraculous.

This brief iconographical survey reveals how extensive, significant, and ubiquitous are the differences in treatment of the calling of Peter and Andrew. Vellert's version, as I shall now attempt to demonstrate, accords with the exegetical tradition, as codified in the *Glossa ordinaria* and adapted for the purpose of meditation in the Dutch and Latin editions of Ludolphus of Saxony's *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri*.⁹ Ludolphus would have been consulted as a virtually visual source, not simply because early on, Dutch-language incunabula of his treatise were richly illustrated with woodcuts, but more importantly, because the *Vita Christi* is replete with admonitions internally to generate meditative images of the scenes from Christ's life that Ludolphus pictures for the attentive reader. For example, having remarked Peter's alacrity in following Andrew to Christ, Ludolphus exhorts the votary to fashion an affective image of this noteworthy episode: 'Behold here the humility and obedience of Peter, who did not disdain to follow his younger brother, instead hurrying presently, in no way hesitating to obey'.¹⁰ The true subject of this interior image is the transit of Jesus's gaze, at once internal and external, as it falls on Peter: 'But having looked upon him, not only outwardly, but also inwardly, with the eye of mercy, Jesus, who was gazing into Peter's heart, saw his devotion, and said to him, "You are Simon", which is to say, "obedient"'.¹¹ The relevance of this passage to Vellert's print is obvious: like Ludolphus,

⁹ On the *Vita Christi*, see Broquin F., *Vita Christi. Nouvelle traduction intégrale, avec préface et notes*, 7 vols. (Paris: 1879–1873) I i–xxvii; Passmann A., "Probleme um Ludolph von Sachsen", *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1949–1950) 13–34; Bodenstein M.I., *The Vita Christi of Ludolphus the Carthusian* (Washington, D.C.: 1944); Abbott Conway C., *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and Late Medieval Devotion Centred on the Incarnation: A Descriptive Analysis*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 34 (Salzburg: 1976); Baier W., *Untersuchungen zu den Passionsbetrachtungen in der Vita Christi des Ludolf von Sachsen*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 44, 3 vols. (Salzburg: 1977); Geith K.-E., "Ludolf von Sachsen und Michael von Massa: Zur Chronologie von zwei Leben Jesu-Texten", *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 61 (1987) 304–355; and idem, "Die Vita Jesu Christi des Michaels von Massa", *Augustiana* 38 (1988) 99–117.

¹⁰ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri*, A.R.P. Ludolpho Saxone Cartusiano, ante CCL. *Annos ex Sacris Evangelijs, veterumque Patrum sententijs contexta, atque ita disposita*. (Venice, Apud Guerraeos Fratres & Franciscum Zilettum: 1581) 121, col. 2A: 'Vide hic Petri humilitatem & obedientiam, quia non dedignatur maior sequi minorem, sed confestim occurrit, & nihil tardans obedit'.

¹¹ Ibidem: 'Intuitus autem eum Iesus, oculo misericordiae, non solum exterius sed & interior, videns devotionem eius, quia cor intuetur, dixit ei: Tu es Simon, id est vere obediens'.

he assembles his image round the action of beholding, though now it is Peter's gaze that takes center stage, passing between him and Christ.

In chapter 30, "On What Followed the Calling of the Disciples, and on the Diligence of Christ in Preaching", Ludolphus enjoins the reader to visualize the calling of Peter, and then, in succession, the callings of the other four apostles – Andrew, James, John, and Matthew – whose *vocationes* are described in the Gospels. Aligned to the brief scriptural accounts, the mental images we design must be richer in circumstantial detail and more inflected emotionally. In particular, Ludolphus asks us to pay close attention to the base and humble trades of the men Jesus calls, who were selected to exemplify incontrovertibly that their future accomplishments, in preaching the Gospel and founding the Church, are ascribable to Christ, who works through them. They are living images, first fashioned by him, and in turn, they are now to be imaged internally as spurs to faith. Ludolphus quotes initially from Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*:

Why is it then that we are told about Peter, Andrew, Jacob, John, and Matthew, but not how the other apostles were called, and in what manner? For these [five] were practising very common and humble trades, nor truly is there anything worse than the office of excise-man, or more vile than fishing. Consider, therefore, and closely observe the Lord Jesus, how in the aforesaid callings of [these] disciples, and in his conversation with them, he summons affectionately: rendering himself affable to them, familiar, benevolent, and agreeable, attracting them both from within and without, in order to lead them to his mother's house, or elsewhere where he lodged for a time, as well as familiarly going to visit the disciples' homes.¹²

Whereas Vellert's *Christ Walking on Water* depicts Christ as forceful, admonitory, even forbidding, in the *Calling of Peter and Andrew* he is gentle, peaceable, and approachable, though also hortatory, and as such, coincides in many respects to the image generated by Ludolphus. Made to seem very tall by our close vantage point, he yet inclines his head and

¹² Ibidem 139, col. 1C–D: 'Quid est autem quod de alijs Apostolis nobis non dicitur qualiter, & quomodo sunt vocati, nisi de Petro, Andrea, Iacobo, & Ioanne, & Matthaeo? Hi enim maxime erant in convenientibus & humilibus studijs, neque enim telonij officio est aliquid deterius, neque piscatione vilis. Considera igitur, & conspice Dominum Iesum in praedictis discipulorum vocationibus & conversatione eius cum illis, quomodo affectuose eos vocat: reddens se eis affabilem, domesticum, benignum, & obsequiosum: attrahens eos intus & extra, ducendo eos ad domum matris, vel alibi ubi pro tempore manebat, & familiariter vadens ad domos eorum'. Cf. Prevost G. (trans.), *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Gospel of Matthew*, 3 vols. (Oxford: 1852) II 436.

bends his knee, as if accommodating himself to the lower estate of Peter. He has positioned himself where he may best be seen, and now swivels to address Peter and Andrew, further adapting himself to them.

Vellert was biblically literate and thoroughly familiar with typological usage, as Ellen Konowitz has amply shown in her dissertation and publications on Vellert's prints, drawings, and designs for stained glass. As she points out in her discussion of the eighteen drawings of 1523 that document a lost series of stained glass roundels consisting of paired scenes from the Old and New Testaments, Vellert was not only intimately familiar with such typological models as the *Biblia pauperum*, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, and *Pictor in carmine*, but was himself adept at mixing types and antitypes ingeniously.¹³ Konowitz plausibly argues, for instance, that he was one of the first artists to connect the rare theme of the *Return from the Flight into Egypt* to the covenantal theme of the *Crossing of the Red Sea*, on the basis of *Hosea* 11:1, 'Out of Egypt I called my son', which is one of four Old Testament prophecies of the return from the flight, cited (but not illustrated) in the *Biblia pauperum*.¹⁴ Many of the features that distinguish Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* correlate to exegetical arguments disseminated by Ludolphus in his great meditative treatise, the *Vita Christi*, also known as the *Summa evangelica*, and popularized in abridged vernacular redactions.

First published as an incunabulum in Cologne and Strasbourg in 1474, the *Vita Christi* was soon translated into Dutch: *Tboeck van den leven ons heeren Jhesu Christi* (Gheraert de Leeu: Antwerp, 1487), also known as *Dit es dleven ons liefs heren ihesu Christi*, is a compressed adaptation of the *Vita*.¹⁵ Embellished with 147 woodcuts varying in size from quarter- to

¹³ Konowitz, *Dirk Jacobsz. Vellert* 28–39; eadem, "The Roundel Series of Dirick Vellert", in Husband T.B. (ed.), *The Luminous Image: Painted Glass Roundels in the Lowlands, 1480–1560* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York] (New York: 1995) 145–147.

¹⁴ Konowitz, *Dirk Jacobsz. Vellert* 35.

¹⁵ On the *Vita Christi* and its Dutch offspring, see Deschamps J., "De 'Vita Christi' van Ludolf van Saksen in het Middelnederlands", in Grauwe J. de (ed.), *Historia et spiritualitas cartusienensis: Colloquii Quarti Internationalis Acta* (Destelbergen: 1983) 157–176; and Geith K.-E., "Die Lateinische Quelle des 'Tleven ons Heren Ihesu Cristi'", in Dauven-van Knippenberg C. – Birkhan H. (eds.), *Sô wold ick in fröiden singen: Festgabe für Anthonius H. Touber zum 65. Geburtstag, Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 43–44 (Amsterdam: 1995) 195–204. On *Tboeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* and its relation to other Lives of Jesus modeled on Ludolphus's *Vita Christi* and the Pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditationes vitae Christi*, such as *Dat leven ons liefs heren Jhesu Christi*, the *Tractaet vanden leven ons heren Jesu Christi*, and the Pseudo Bonaventuran-Ludolphine *Tleven ons heren Ihesu Cristi*, see Willeumier-Schalij J.M., "Grondpatronen voor Middelnederlandse Levens van Jesus in gebeden", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 93 (1977) 76–85; Bruin C.C. de,

full-folio, the book appeared in three versions and twelve editions between 1487 and 1536, all of which incorporate commentaries in the form of dialogic exchanges between *Mensche* (Humankind) and *Scriptura* (Holy Writ).¹⁶ Like the *Vita*, *Dleven* insists on the exegetical and meditative utility of visual images: the Prologue states in no uncertain terms that the reader, if he 'wishes to draw fruit for [his] soul, must make present within the heart, all the words and deeds of our Lord Jesus, in this manner – as if he were hearing them with [his] ears and seeing them with [his] eyes, earnestly, decorously, and joyfully'.¹⁷ With this goal in mind, the redactor

Tleven ons heren Ihesu Cristi: Het Pseudo-Bonaventura-Ludolfiaanse Leven van Jesus, Corpus Sacrae Scripturae Neerlandicae Medii Aevi, Miscellanea 2 (Leiden: 1980) VII–XXV; Goudriaan K., "Nederlandstalige meditatieve Levens van Jezus op de vroege drukpers: Een terreinverkenning", *Spiegel der Letteren* 49 (2007) 143–164; and Hollander A.A. den, "Middel nederlandse Levens van Jezus: *Uuten .iiii. ewangelisten ene evangelie ghemaect*", in Hollander A.A. den – Kwakkel E. – Scheepsma W. (eds.), *Middel nederlandse bijbelvertalingen* (Hilversum: 2007) 179–190.

¹⁶ On the three versions of *Tboeck van den leven ons heeren Jhesu Christi* – Gerard Leeu's editio princeps of 1487, Claes Leeu's revision of 1488, which interpolates moralizations, spiritual lessons, meditative exercises, and closing prayers, and Hendrik Eckert van Homberch's revision of 1521, which prefaces the Gospel readings with Epistles from the Lectionary – see Dlabáčová A., "Drukken en publieksgroepen: Productie en receptie van gedrukte Middel nederlandse meditatieve Levens van Jezus (ca. 1479–1540)", *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 79 (2005–2008) 321–368, esp. 330–346. As Dlabáčová shows, there were two incunabula editions of version A; three incunabula and three post-incunabula editions of version B; and three post-incunabula editions of version C. Surviving copies can be traced mainly to religious communities, both female (Augustinians, Carmelites, and Beguines) and male (Carmelites and House of Emmaus), but there is also clear evidence of lay ownership (seven laymen and a married couple, Martin and Anna Benius, who presented a copy to their daughter upon her entry into a convent). Epigraphs, marginal notations, corrections, and underlining, along with old repairs to the bindings, indicate that the book was much perused; in addition, the Beguines of Dermonde placed it in their infirmary, for the express use of the sick. The provenance of surviving copies – Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Embden, Gouda, Utrecht, and elsewhere – reveals that *Dleven* circulated throughout the Low Countries. On the form, function, and argument of *Tboeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi*, see Lem A., "De Zwolse drukker Peter van Os en zijn relatie met Gheraert Leeu", in Goudriaan K. – Abels P. – Habermehl N. – Rosier B. (eds.), *Een drukker zoekt publiek: Gheraert Leeu te Gouda 1477–1484* (Delft: 1993) 63–85; Rosier B., "Gheraert Leeus illustraties bij het leven van Jezus", in *ibidem* 133–161; Lem A., "De houtsneden van Gheraert Leeu in de Zwolse incunabelen van Peter van Os", in Hermans J.M.M. – Hoek K. van der (eds.), *Boeken in de late Middeleeuwen: Verslag van de Groningse Codicologendagen 1992* (Groningen: 1994) 93–100; Cockx-Indestege E., "De buitenkant en de binnenkant: Een leven van Jezus gedrukt door Gheraert Leeu in 1487", in Pauwels J. (ed.), *Gheprint tAntwerpen: Het boek in Antwerpen van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw* (Kapellen: 2004) 32–45.

¹⁷ *Dit es dleven ons liefs heren jhesu cristi anderwren gheprint gecorrigeert ende merckelike verbeteret met addicien van schoonen moralen ende geesteliken leeringhen ende devoten meditacien.* (Antwerp, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch: 1512) fol. II recto: 'Ende ofstu in desen begheres vrucht te crighen dijnre sielen soe bewijst di metter herten tegenwoerdich alle die woerden ende wercken die van onsen here ihesu ghesproken ende ghewracht

(whom for brevity's sake I shall henceforth call 'Ludolphus') furnishes a full-length woodcut portrait of Christ, inscribed 'I am the way, the truth, and the life', and accompanied by a long descriptive text recalling the so-called 'Letter of Publius Lentulus' [Fig. 10]. Entitled "This Is the True Physiognomical Figure or Form of our Dear Lord Jesus Christ, just as He Was when He Wandered on Earth", the description ends with the instruction: 'And in truth, the psalm of David rightfully calls him "fairer than the children of men". For this reason, every good Christian should often endeavor to imprint in memory the sweet, friendly countenance of Jesus, and to meditate his holy life and gospel, his bitter Passion and glorious Resurrection, in the way that has already been explained'.¹⁸

The features peculiar to Vellert's engraving, but correlatable to the Dutch and Latin versions of Ludolphus's treatise, may be encapsulated as follows: the allusive layering of *Luke* 5:8–10 and *John* 1:41–42, collateral accounts of the earliest meetings between Jesus and Peter, within *Matthew* 4:18–20 (and its counterpart, *Mark* 1:16–18); the emphasis on Peter, whose awareness of Christ is visually underscored; the turning motion of Christ, who begins to speak, having presumably just seen the two brethren hauling in their nets, as chronicled in *Matthew* 4:18 and *Mark* 1:16 (respectively, 'ambulans autem Iesus iuxta mare Galilaeae, vidit duos fratres', and 'et praeteriens secus mare Galilaeae vidit Simonem & Andream fratrem eius, mittentes retia in mare');¹⁹ his internal gaze and contemplative expression, which suggest that he is formulating, as an instrument of conversion, the pregnant visual analogy of fishing to preaching; and

sijn gheweest in dier manieren als ofstu dat met dijnen oren hoerdes ende metten oghen saghes naerstelijck sedelijc ende blijdelic'. In the main body of this essay, *Dleven des heren*, or simply *Dleven*, is used hereafter as shorthand for *Tboeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi*.

¹⁸ On the question of *Dleven's* readership, especially as pertains to beguines and female religious, see Hagemeijer P., "Devote vrouwen in Holland omstreeks 1400", in Lettinck N. – Moolenbroek J.J. van (eds.), *In de schaduw van de eeuwigheid: Tien studies over religie en samenleving in laatmiddeleeuws Nederland aangeboden aan prof. dr. A.H. Bredero* (Utrecht: 1986) 224–241; Hemptinne T. de, "Reading, Writing, and Devotional Practices: Lay and Religious Women and the Written Word in the Low Countries (1350–1550)", in Hemptinne T. de – Góngora M.E., *The Voice of Silence: Women's Literacy in a Men's Church* (Turnhout: 2004) 111–126; Warnar G., "Tleven ons heren Jhesu Christi: Female Readers and Dutch Devotional Literature in the Fifteenth Century", in Dijk J. van – Nip R., *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies. Festschrift in Honour of Anneke Mulder-Bakker on the Occasion of Her Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Turnhout: 2005) 25–41; and Dlabáčová, "Drukken en publieksgroepen" 341–346.

¹⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, scriptural passages in Latin are quoted from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, eds. R. Weber – B. Fischer – H.I. Frede – H.F.D. Sparks – W. Thiele (Stuttgart: 1994).

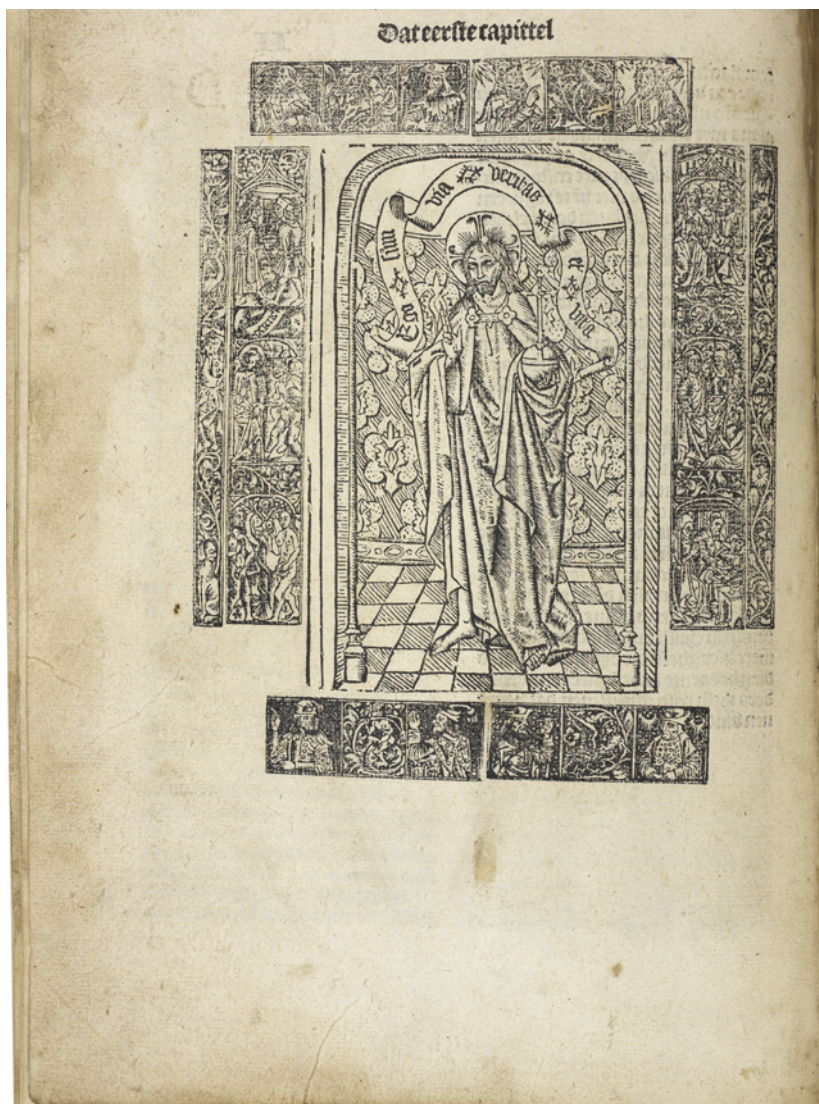


Fig. 10. Anonymous, *Christ Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, ca. 1488. Woodcut illustration from *Dit es dleven ons liefs heren jhesu cristi anderwerven gheprint gecorrigeert ende merckelike verbeteret met addicien van schoonen moralen ende geesteliken leeringhen ende devoten meditacien*. (Antwerp, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch: 27 April 1512). London, British Library 4805.i.14.

lastly, the turbulence of the water around the boat.²⁰ The multiplicity of notable features invites us to meditate what exactly Peter is being given by Christ to apprehend. Peter may be seen to observe how Christ ponders the meaning of an everyday task, fishing, which he is converting into a metaphor (or, better, a condensed parable) of Christian ministry, namely, fishing for men as a simile of preaching. The print turns not only on this specific analogy, but also on the larger analogy between the metaphorical conversion of fishing and its impact on Peter – his spiritual conversion into a disciple of Christ. My essay considers how this analogy of cause and effect, arising from close familiarity with the scriptural text, operates as a trope for the meditative process of visual exegesis upon which the sacred effect of Vellert's print ultimately depends.

The Calling of Peter in Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 5, and John 1

Let us begin with the implicit references to *Luke* 5:8–10 and *John* 1:41–42. Their virtual presence was licensed by the exegetical harmonization of *Matthew* 4:18–20 and *Mark* 1:16–18 to these prior episodes of calling. According to Ludolphus, whose argument derives from the *Glossa ordinaria*, they together constitute the threefold calling of Peter, whom Jesus summoned along with Andrew, James, and John. As *Dleven ons heeren* puts it:

Therefore, you should learn from the Gospel, that certain disciples – namely, Peter, Andrew, James, and John – were called three times by the Lord Jesus. Firstly, soon after our Lord was baptized by John the Baptist. Secondly, as described by Luke, when our Lord sat in Simon Peter's small boat and preached, and though they followed him then, they did so with the intention of resuming their livelihood. Finally, they were called from the shore of Lake Galilee, whither the Lord Jesus had gone, and at this time the aforesaid

²⁰ The woodcuts in editions of *Dleven des heeren* illustrate only one scene of calling – that of Andrew and his companion in *John* 1:39. Chapter 21 incorporates this composite image: at left, John the Baptist shows Christ to Andrew and a fellow disciple; they reappear at right, now positioned behind the same figure of Christ, who turns back to address them. Chapter 27 includes a composite image of Christ preaching from the ship in the foreground, with the miraculous draught of fishes in the background, but *Luke* 5: 10, the calling of Peter, is left out. On the illustrations printed in Gerard Leeu's editio princeps of 1487, see Indestege L., "Inleiding", in *TBoeck vanden leven ons heeren Iesu Christi* (Geeraert Leeu, Antwerpen 1487). Facsimile-druk van de houtsneden (Antwerp: 1952) V–XIV. New woodblocks were cut for the second edition of version one, published in Delft by either Jacob Jacozoon van der Meer or Christiaen Snellart, on which see Dlabáčová, "Drukken en publieksgroepen" 332–333; as she notes, the woodcuts became gradually smaller in the editions of 1495 and later.

disciples, having been summoned, left behind everything they owned, never again to revert to their temporal and terrestrial possessions, but rather, following after the Lord in cheerful poverty.²¹

Accordingly, in the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, Simon Peter can be inferred both to see *and* to know Christ [Fig. 1]. He is recognizing the master whom he has twice previously met and once briefly followed, whose messianic humanity he has hitherto acknowledged (*John* 1:41: 'Invenimus Messiam, quod interpretatum est Christus'), and whose divinity he has hitherto proclaimed (*Luke* 5:8: 'Exi a me domine, quia homo peccator sum'). Moreover, the analogy Jesus tenders is to be construed as no less familiar than his method of teaching with similitudes. In *Luke* 5:10, seeking to reassure a fearful Simon, he has likened fishing to Peter's future as preacher: 'Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men'. And in *John* 1:42, he has dubbed him Cephas, comparing Simon to an immovable rock (*Petrus*), the image of which portends unshakeable faith. In looking up at Christ, therefore, while firmly grasping his nets, Peter can be deemed the knowing recipient of the parallel Jesus draws, and himself bodies forth, between fishers and preachers. As 'Ludolphus' states, Jesus puts himself forward as the very image of the preacher cum fisherman he is urging Peter to become: 'And so the sweet Lord went to the water's edge, in order to fish for the fishers themselves, saying to them: "Come and follow me", that is, follow my works and my doctrine, "I shall make you fishers of men", for with the net of holy preaching, they would pull men from the depths of the sea, that is, from faithlessness, unto the shore of salvation'.²²

²¹ *Dit es dleven ons heren jhesu cristi. Derdewerf gecorrigeert ende verbeteret, met schone moralizacien ende gheestelike leeringhen ende devote meditacien. Ende achter elck capittle is een devoot ghebet ghestelt. Oock sijn hier noch toe ghedaen alle die Epistolen vanden geheelen iare met haer glose ende verstandelike expositie elc op sijn Evangelie dienende.* (Antwerp, Hendrik Eckert van Homberch: 1521) fol. L recto: 'Aldus suldi verstaen wten evangelie van sommigen discipulen als van Peeter Andreas Jacob ende Joannes dat si drie werf van den here Jesu geroepen sijn. Eerst bi sint Jan Baptist also haest als onse here gedopt was. Ten anderen als Lucas beschrijft doe onse here in Simon petrus sceepken gheseten hadde ende ghepredict, ende die tijt sijn si hem ghevolcht, noch wil hebbende weder tot haer ambacht te gaen. Ten derden sijn si gheroepen aen dat selve meyr van Galileen daer de here Jesus aen den oevers des meys ginc, ende op die tijt hebben dese voerseide discipulen gheroepen zijnde, al achter ghelaten dat si hadden, niet wederkerende tot tijtlike ende aertsche dingen, mer altijt sijn si den here Jesum in willige armoede naghevolcht'.

²² *Ibidem*, fol. XLIX verso: 'Also ginc dye soete here ontrent den water om die vissceers selve te visscen, ende seyde tot hen. Comet ende volcht mi, dat is volcht mijn wercken ende leeringen, ic sal u maken visschers der menschen, want door dat net der heyliger predicacien so hebben si die menschen getrocken wter diepheyte der zee, dats der onge-loovicheyt, totten oever der salicheit'.

The third and final calling of Peter is the moment of his irrevocable conversion, as Ludolphus emphasizes, when the analogical conversion of fishing into preaching is made to stand for Simon's transformation into Petrus, aspirant disciple and fisher of men. In *Dleven ons heeren*, Mensche comments on this double analogy, in which fishing comes to signify Christian ministry, and this metaphorical usage then comes to represent conversion in a spiritual sense. Mensche declares: 'I hear a most wonderful conversion of fishing and the fished (wonderlike verwandelinghe van visscerien ende van tgevisschen). For when fish are caught they quickly die, but as I understand it, the men fished by the word of God henceforth live eternally'.²³ 'Verwandelinghe' here denotes the figurative transposition of one thing into a metaphor of another, and also the spiritual transformation, thereby figured, of men whom the Gospel has ensnared and transposed into the saved.

The Ludolphine term *verwandelinghe* helps us better to understand what, in the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, Jesus relays to Peter, and conversely, what Peter discerns in Jesus. Vellert, as noted above, depicts Christ in mid-motion, as if devising the analogy he turns to deliver. He is literally 'verwandelende', shifting position, changing his axis of orientation, in order visually to represent, in a condensed parable of vocation, the 'verwandelinghe' he invites Peter to execute. Or rather, his 'verwandelinghe,' acted out for Peter's benefit, not only serves as an analogue for the verbal (and inherently visual) analogy he is putting forth, the shift in significance he is effecting, but also as an enacted metaphor for the 'verwandelinghe', the spiritual transmutation, he actively solicits. For his part, what Peter sees is Christ turning, in the dual sense of devising a turn of phrase, and occasioning a turn of the soul.²⁴

His eyes locked on Jesus, Peter's alteration, his *verwandelinghe*, is signaled in the print by the similarity between the dual actions he executes – head raised, arms lowered, gaze cast outward, grasp drawn upward – and the dual gestures of Christ, one hand raised in blessing, the other lowered to clasp and lift his mantel. Even now, Vellert seems to suggest, Peter has

²³ Ibidem: 'Ic hoore een seer wonderlike verwandelinghe van visscerien ende van tgevisschen. Want als men visschen gevangen heeft so sterven si ter stont, ende so ic verstaet als dye menschen metten woorde gods ghevischt zijn so leven si eewelijc'.

²⁴ It should be noted that whereas the narrative context indicates that Christ is turning toward Peter, the analogical context invites a more expansive reading: he may be inferred to be pivoting not only toward Peter, but conversely, also toward the viewer, as if fishing for one's attention and attachment. His silhouette is poised midway between the two catches he fishes: Peter and Andrew to his right, the beholder to his left.

begun the process of recasting himself in the image of Christ. Complementarily, having perambulated to the water's edge, from where he turns toward Peter, Jesus makes himself fully visible to the brothers fishing just beyond the littoral. In addition, he faces into the raking light that streams in from the left and brightly illuminates him from head to toe. He thereby ensures that Peter is made visually aware of the message he is transmitting.

This message is inherently visual, as Ludolphus and his chief source, the *Glossa ordinaria*, make evident. In *Dleven ons heeren* the calling of Peter, as previously mentioned, is the third in a sequence of callings that hinge on close observation of Christ, who gives himself to be seen, as if he were putting forth an exemplary image. The visual experiences he purveys are evinced as instruments of conversion, firstly to Andrew and his companion, whom he commands to 'come and behold' him (*John* 1:39). Jesus is answering their question, 'Lord, where do you reside?' Andrew, soon after, prompted by what he has seen and heard, reciprocates in kind, showing the newly found Messiah to his brother Peter (*John* 1:41). The same holds true for Nathanael, the next to be called after Andrew, Peter, and Philip (Nathanael's brother). Philip persuades Nathanael to seek out Jesus, even though the Lord's home town, Nazareth, is a place ignored by the prophets and not associated with the Christ. Nathanael, at first skeptical, asks, 'But can anything good [that is, the Messiah] come from Nazareth', to which Philip replies in the words of Jesus, pressing his brother likewise to 'come and behold' (*John* 1:46). 'Ludolphus' explains that Philip in this way encourages Nathanael to 'observe and confess the Christ by the Messiah's words and works'.²⁵ The force of this exchange is thus to privilege, even above Scripture, the visual evidence offered by the Lord. Jesus himself underscores this point, when he manufactures a verbal image, meant to fortify Nathanael, that recalls a visionary image familiar to him – Jacob's ladder – and prophesies, as *Dleven* purports, the Resurrection and the Ascension: "Because I said to you that I saw you [sitting] under the fig tree, you believe; you shall see more things than these, for I say truly that you shall behold the heaven opened, and the angels ascending and descending in service to the son of God", that is, in his Resurrection and Ascension'.²⁶

²⁵ Ibidem, fol. XLIIJ recto: 'En geloof dijt nyet so comet ende besietet, als oft hi seggen wilde ghi sult dat wt zijn woerden ende wercken wel mercken ende bekennen'.

²⁶ Ibidem: 'Om dat ic u geseyt heb dat ic u onder den vigeboom gesien hadde so gheloof di, ghi sult noch meer dinghen sien dan dese zijn, want ic segghe u voer waer ghy sult den

Peter's first three encounters with Christ, as construed by 'Ludolphus', are set firmly within this lineage of evangelical sights seen as spurs to discipleship. Take the second meeting at the miraculous draught of fishes (*Luke* 5:8), which 'having observed' ('siende'), Peter interprets as a 'great sign' ('grote teeken') of the mystery of the Incarnation that has made the whole of Christ – his divinity and humanity – discernible: 'And Peter, having beheld these great signs, humbly fell down at the knees of his master Jesus, declaring fervidly, "O Lord, depart from my small boat, leave me, for I am but a sinful man, unworthy to be near you, who are both God and man"'.²⁷ The extra-scriptural phrase, 'die god zijt ende mensche', is interpolated to connect the theme of vision to the mystery of faith that undergirds the new covenant of Christ, making him apprehensible to the mere fishermen he is calling. According to 'Ludolphus', the third time Jesus approaches Peter is when, having formerly learned to know the mystery of Godhead, he decides definitively to leave his former life and follow the Lord, bearing witness to – in the sense of making evident or manifest – the Christian faith he will later promulgate amongst Jews and Gentiles. The phrase 'getuychnisse gheven soudē te leeren' signifies that these neophytes are themselves enabled to bear witness to Christ, the image of whom is thereby preserved, successively conveyed from Christian to Christian in perpetuity.²⁸

Consequently, the gaze that Peter casts in Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* portends, with reference to *Dleven*, his decision wholeheartedly to espouse the image of Jesus and spiritually to cast his nets as fisherman of Christ. The Dutch redaction prefaces chapter 27, "How Jesus Called the Disciples to Himself for the Second and Third Time", with a long scriptural citation (1 *Peter* 3:8–15) that is interpreted as Peter's epistolary gloss on *Luke* 5:1–11 and *Matthew* 4:18–20: 'The holy apostle Saint Peter writes this epistle on the gospel [pericopes] that follow'.²⁹ In effect, Peter comments on what he saw from off shore, and how the presence of Christ

hemel sien op luyken, ende die engelen op ende neder climmen ten dienst van den sone gods, te weten in zijn verrisenisse ende opvaert ten hemel'.

²⁷ Ibidem, fol. XLIX recto: 'Ende Peeter dese grote teekenē siende soe is hi ootmoedelijc voor Jesu op zijn knien gevallen als voor sinen here, seggende tot Jhesum met groter innicheyt. O here wilt wt mijn sceepken ende van mi gaen want ic ben een sondich mensche, ic en ben niet weerdich dat ghi u bi mi sult voegen, ghij die god zijt ende mensche'.

²⁸ Ibidem, fol. L recto: '[...] van welcken si namaels voer heeren ende vorsten heydenen ende Joden getuychnisse gheven soudē te leeren, ende te vestigen dat kersten gheloove'.

²⁹ Ibidem, fol. XLVIIJ verso: 'Dese Epistel beschrijft die heylige apostel sinte Peeter op dit navolgende evangelie seggende'.

transformed him: 'Dearly beloved, be ye all of one mind in worship, lovers of brotherhood [...] not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing ('ghebenediende'), for in this were you called, that you may possess blessing ('benedijnghe') as an inheritance. [...] For the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord upon them that do evil things'.³⁰ Jesus's compound gesture of blessing, silhouetted by Vellert and thus made conspicuous, corresponds to Peter's insistence on blessing as the chief birthright conferred by Christ on his true followers. His incipient motion of turning to face Peter, to be discussed more fully below, perhaps correlates to the parallel, drawn by the epistle, between the calling of the just and the Lord's directing of his eyes onto the righteous.

The Latin edition of the *Vita Christi* provides the larger context for the theme of vision, foregrounded in the *vocationes* of Peter and the other disciples. *John* 1:37–51, the first in the sequence, is interpreted as an epitome of the way that Christ's visible presence, in seizing the viewer's attention, functions as the primary means of knowing him, and thence, of securing faith in his doctrine. Andrew, Peter, James, and John closely observed the Lord, because his every action is laden with religious significance, as Ludolphus later declares in chapter 31, "On the Calling of Matthew, and on his Banquet". He retrospectively summarizes what was laudable about the disciples' first responses to Christ, contrasting them to the Pharisees: 'But these selfsame Pharisees murmured against the Lord's beneficence in provoking sinners to penitence: [against him] whose food, and drink, and journeying, like everything he brings forth, serve for salvation: in whose every action consist our reading and our instruction'.³¹ This passage licenses the many subtleties on view in Vellert's Christ – his pose, gestures, and countenance – the details of whom demand closely to be scrutinized, not only by Peter looking from sea, but also by us, looking from shore and at the threshold of the picture, in close proximity to Christ.

³⁰ Ibidem: 'Alderliefste weest alle eendrachtich inden gebede, minnaers der broederlicheyt [...] gheen quaet om quaet weder gevende, noch vloec om vloecken, mer daer tegen ghebenediende, want daer in zijt ghi gheroepen dat ghi die benedijnghe tot erffenisse besitten sult. [...] Want die oghen des heeren zijn op die gherechte ende zijn ooren in haer ghebeden mer dat aensicht des heren is op de ghene die quaet doen'.

³¹ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 142, col. 2D–E: 'Sed ipsis Pharisaeis murmurantibus obviat Domini misericordia, provocans peccatores ad poenitentiam: cuius cibus, & potus, & ambulatio, & omnia quae gessit, saluti serviunt: cuius omnis actio nostra est lectio & instructio'. Cf. ibidem 120, col. 2A, Ludolphus's admonition thoroughly to scrutinize even the smallest scriptural matters in search of Christ: 'Ecce paucis voluntatem suam, & cur eum sequerentur, insinuant: sapienti enim multa ex paucis innotescunt'.

The visibility of Christ, as Ludolphus asseverates in chapter 24, "On John's Testimony of Christ, the First Calling of the Disciples, and the Hidden Preaching of Christ", originates in the mystery of the Incarnation, which he expounds, in purely visual terms, as the divine principle that allows the disciples to contemplate, by means of perspicuous images, the new covenant initiated by Jesus.³² The argument is a fuller version of the one put forward in *Dleven ons heeren*. Ludolphus comes closer here than anywhere else in the *Vita Christi* to formulating an image-theory that justifies the enterprise of visual exegesis, based as it is on the images of Christ ('species') to be found in Scripture. His account allows us to surmise that Vellert's Peter is imprinting the contemplative image that Jesus propagates for his spiritual advancement. Quoting from Bede's *Homily 34 on John 1*, Ludolphus expounds *John 1: 39*, specifically Jesus's directive, 'Come and see', addressed to the first of his prospective disciples, but which the *Vita Christi* interprets as a distillation of the Christian vocation, relevant to all true followers of Christ. The grace of Christ having unveiled a new dispensation, his adherents shall finally be able to see the truths he makes manifest by virtue of visual images and mental pictures ('visuri specie').

Whence [says] Bede: They did not wish only fleetingly to rejoice in the instruction of truth, but rather, were seeking out his habitation, in order more fully to be instructed; but whenever we recall to mind the advent of the incarnation of Christ, let us request with a full heart, that he consent to reveal the place of his eternal habitation. In truth, he replied, 'Come and see', kindly responding to their entreaty: come hither, as John testifies, from the burden of the law, to the fountain of grace; and behold, faith having been revealed, you shall at last see by means of species. Or as Alcuin puts it [in Thomas Aquinas's *Commentary on John 1*]: My dwelling-place is not to be ascertained in word, but to be demonstrated in deed; and so, come, that you may believe and do good works, and see, that you may understand. Or as Origen says [in the *Commentary on John 3*]: by *venite*, he calls to action, by *videte*, to contemplation. [...] Let us therefore build in our heart [a house] where he may dwell, and within ourselves let us fabricate a home for his coming, where he may converse with and instruct us.³³

³² On Ludolphus's method of meditative image-making, as it relates to his understanding of incarnation doctrine, see Abbott Conway, Jr., *Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony* 43–63, 122–144. Throughout the *Vita Christi*, Ludolphus endorses the use of verbal images, the fictive present of which makes the Gospels apprehensible and thereby initiates the exegetical process.

³³ *Ibidem* 120, col. 2B–D: 'Unde Beda: Nolebant transitorie magisterio veritatis perfrui, sed mansionem quaerebant, ut plenius ab eo possent instrui, sed nos quotiens incarnationis Christi transitum ad mentem reducimus, sollicito corde eum rogemus, ut mansionis aeternae, habitationem nobis dignetur ostendere. Ipse vero, liberaliter condescendens eorum petitioni, respondit eis. Venite, & videte: venite testimonio Ioannis, ab onere legis,

This reading of *John* 1:39 is designed to justify the project of the *Vita Christi*, which propagates verbal images of Christ, to be enshrined in the heart, where the votary may frequently consult and consider them, for the purpose of self-reflection and self-amendment, with a view to refashioning himself in the image of Christ. If we do this, avows Ludolphus, we shall see and hear Christ within us ('audientes & videntes eum'), just as did the disciples, with crystalline clarity, 'for where Christ, the light of virtue and sun of justice, is, there can be no shadows'.³⁴ The mystery of the Incarnation, seen in these terms, provides a warrant for Ludolphus's efforts to devise contemplative images of the life of Christ, comprising *species* discernible to the eyes of the spirit. In positioning himself on shore, gesturing toward Peter, and stirring him to take notice of an analogy that itself operates visually, Jesus, as rendered by Vellert, can be said to communicate via species that he broadcasts to the recipient's eyes, heart, and mind. As Peter has filled his net, so Jesus fills Peter's heart, demonstrating in deed ('opere demonstratur'), by approaching him, how he should likewise respond to the Lord's summons. Jesus is giving Peter a foretaste of what it shall be like, in the words of 2 *Peter* 1:16, to become 'eyewitnesses of his greatness' ('speculatores facti illius magnitudinis'), and thereby, now in the words of Ludolphus, to become 'future beholders' of the images he has vouchsafed ('tandem visuri specie').

Scripture is quite specific about the form and function of the analogical image Christ utilizes to convert Peter into a fisher of men. In *Luke* 4:16–32, before meeting Peter for the second time at the lake of Genesareth, Jesus visits the synagogue at Nazareth and publicly expounds *Isaiah* 61:1. Having first identified himself as the Messiah foreseen by Isaiah, he then addresses his incredulous auditors, whom he accuses of drawing a false analogy, inimical to the prophet's meaning: 'And he said to them, "Doubtless you will say to me this similitude ('hanc similitudinem'): Physician, heal thyself; as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country"'. In contradistinction to their falsely

ad fontem gratiae: & videte, revelata fide, tandem visuri specie, quasi dicat secundum Alcuinum, Habitaculum meum, explicari non potest sermone, sed opere demonstratur: venite ergo credendo & bene operando, & videte intelligendo. Vel secundum Origenem, per hoc quod dicit, venite, ad actionem invitat, per hoc autem quod dicit, videte, ad contemplationem. [...] Aedificemus ergo & nos in corde nostro, ubi habitet, & in nobismetipsis faciamus domum quo veniat, & nobis colloquatur, & nos doceat'. Cf. Bede, *The Complete Works of the Venerable Bede*, ed. J.A. Giles, 12 vols. (1843–1844) V 251.

³⁴ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 120, col. 2D: 'quia ubi est Christus, lux virtutum & sol iustitiae, ibi nullae tenebrae possunt esse'.

literal comparison of Christ to a medical doctor, he draws a true analogy between himself and the prophet Elijah, who was divinely sent not to his own disbelieving people, but alone to the widow of Sarepta; and also between himself and the prophet Elisha, who was sent to cleanse not the lepers in Israel, but only Naaman the Syrian, who like the widow had faith in God. Like Elijah and Elisha, in other words, he comes to heal and restore both the body and the spirit, as an agent of godliness.³⁵ The *Glossa ordinaria*, Ludolphus's main exegetical source, explains that the Jews fail to know Christ on two counts: on the one hand, they recognize him as Joseph the carpenter's son, and nothing more; on the other, they merely think of him as an exceptional physician, not grasping that the vocation of carpenter, like that of physician, is meant figuratively, for both are analogical similitudes:

Just as they call him son of a carpenter, so by the same foolish error do they call him doctor, and yet truth lies hidden in their error. For truly he was the son of the artificer (*filius fabri*) who in the beginning created everything through him, who operates through the fire of the Holy Spirit, and who fashions every genus of vessel within the great house of this world. And he is a physician, for through him all things are renewed, in heaven and on earth – the physician who says, "It is not the healthy who have need of a doctor, but the sick".³⁶

By contrast, when Jesus, shortly thereafter, addresses Simon Peter, he favors him with an analogy – 'from henceforth thou shalt catch men' – testing his power of discernment, having previously cast aspersions upon his skeptical Jewish brethren and reproached their failure properly to analogize: 'This specially concerns Peter, to whom is made known what it shall mean to capture fish. For just as now with nets he catches fish, so

³⁵ *Luke 4:24–27*: 'And he said: Amen I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country. In truth I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth. And to none of them was Elias sent, but to Sarepta of Sidon, to a widow woman. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian'.

³⁶ *Bibliorum sacrorum cum glossa ordinaria iam ante quidem a Strabo Fulgensi collecta, nunc autem novis, cum Graecorum, tum Latinorum patrum expositionibus locupletata*, eds. François Fevarden – Jean Dadré – Jacques de Cuilly, 6 vols. (Venice, s.n.: 1603) V, col. 750E: 'Sicut fabri filium, ita eadem erroris dementia medicum vocant, sed in errore illorum veritas latet. Vere enim erat filius fabri, qui per ipsum in principio omnia fecit, qui operatur in spiritussancto & igni, qui in magna domo huius mundi facit vasa diversi generis. Est & medicus, quia per ipsum omnia, quae in caelis & quae in terra, sunt restaurata. Qui de se dicit, Non est opus valentibus medicus, sed male habentibus'.

with words he shall henceforth capture men, and in this respect Peter is the image of the whole Church'.³⁷ With regard to the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, the *Glossa*'s account of these analogical similitudes provides a ready context in which to situate the analogous motion of Christ, who addresses Peter, singling him out, as did Elijah the poor widow of Sarepta, and Elisha the leprous Namaan, and furthermore, turning toward him, in order to turn him toward the Lord. The latter analogy – of turning – signals the further analogy of fishing, the one analogy standing for the other, with both analogies ultimately standing for spiritual conversion (from the Latin 'converto', to turn).

There is another respect in which the *Glossa* proves apposite: namely, as regards Jesus's curiously compound gesture of blessing and admonition that also resembles the painting gesture of the evangelist in *St. Luke Painting the Virgin and Child*. In converting Peter, Christ refashions him in his own image, and accordingly, the visual analogies he executes stand for yet another analogy – that between himself and his follower to be, an analogy based in the *imitatio Christi*. The *Glossa* addresses precisely this theme of conformation: the reshaping of Peter in the likeness of Christ is compared to the painter's activity of image-making. The glosses on the calling of Simon and Andrew, James and John, in *Mark* 1:16–19, interpret their names as figurative images of the cardinal virtues they embody, the lineaments of which Jesus here stitches together into a seamless fabric representing the Christian vocation. They and we, their imitators, are thereby reconstituted as the living image of God – *in imaginem Dei convertimur* – into which all his true followers, past and present, are subsumed. Thus interpreted, the calling of Peter may legitimately be described as an exemplar of divine image-making. The glossator quotes from Jerome's *Commentary on Mark*, as cited in Thomas Aquinas's *Catena aurea*:

Simon *obediens* (obedient), Andreas *virilis* (manly), Iacobus *supplantator* (supplanter), Ioannes *gratia* (grace). We are converted by these names into the image of God: by obedience, to submit; by virility, to struggle; by supplantation, to persevere; by grace, to preserve. 'Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it'. [*Psalm* 126:1] These four are called the cardinal virtues: through prudence, we obey; through justice, we labor

³⁷ Ibidem V, col. 759A: "Ex hoc iam eris homines capiens". Hoc ad ipsum Petrum specialiter pertinet, cui exponitur quod captura significet piscium. Sed sicut tunc per retia pisces, sic per verba aliquando capiet homines, in quo Petro est typus totius ecclesiae'.

manfully; through temperance, we trample serpents; through fortitude, we become worthy of the grace of God.³⁸

Full texts of the *Glossa* append a further statement by Jerome, from the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, to the effect that the clarity of scriptural figures is often obscured by our susceptibility to the blandishments of secular eloquence. Rhetorical utility, our propensity to rely upon verbal expediency, endangers the figurative meanings Christ injects into his figures of speech. In this context, with reference to the calling of Peter and his ilk, Jerome is arguing that the perspicuity of the visual analogy between fishing and fishing for men, precisely because it is drawn by Christ, exemplifies the 'majesty of the senses' to be found in his sermons, homilies, and statements. The potency of the images he deploys transcends the worldly orator's mere ornaments and self-serving turns of phrase: 'Who is there, whom secular eloquence fails to inebriate? Powerful, noble, and wealthy men find it difficult to believe in God, the eloquent more so than these. Their minds are blinded by riches, influence, and luxury; encompassed by vice, they cannot see the virtue and simplicity of sacred scripture. They judge not by the majesty of sense, but by the serviceableness of words'.³⁹

The two passages from Jerome alert us to the exegetical tradition that reads the calling of Peter as an exercise in divine picturing, and Peter himself is regarded as the divine image being manufactured. In fact, the *Glossa* makes this point even more explicitly. The supplementary glosses added by Nicholas of Lyra respond with an analogy, to the analogical usage exemplified by Christ: Jesus is likened to an artist whose hand transforms inert matter into a picture; the humanity of Christ, conjoined as it is to his divinity, is the instrument expressive of that divinity, just as the hand of the artist is his instrument of artifice: 'It must be said that the humanity

³⁸ Ibidem V, col. 491B: 'Simon obediens, Andreas virilis, Iacobus supplantator, Ioannes gratia. His nominibus in imaginem Dei convertimur: Obedientia, ut obediamus, virilitate ut pugnemus, supplantatione ut perseveremus, gratia ut conservemur. Nisi enim dominus aedificaverit domum in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam. Hae quatuor virtutes cardinales dicuntur. Per prudentiam obedimus, per iustitiam viriliter agimus, per temperantiam serpentes calcamus, per fortitudinem Dei gratiam meremur'. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*, 2 vols. (Parma: 1861) I 343.

³⁹ *Bibliorum sacrorum cum glossa ordinaria* V, col. 491B: 'Quem non inebriat eloquentia saecularis? Difficile homines potentes, & nobiles, & divites, & multo his difficilius eloquentes credunt Deo. Obcaecatur mens eorum divitijs & opibus atque luxuria, & circumdati vitiis non possunt videre virtutes, simplicitatemque scripturae sanctae, non ex maiestate sensuum, sed ex verborum iudicant utilitate'. Cf. Migne J.-P. (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus* [...]: *Series Latina Patrologiae*, tomus 25. *S. Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis presbyteri, Commentariorum in Jonam prophetam liber unus* (Paris: 1854), col. 1143C.

of Christ is the conjoined instrument of divinity, just as the hand is the [artist's] instrument of artifice, and on that account, just as the word of Christ moves the ear through the voice, so through the instrument of his divinity, he moves the mind'.⁴⁰ Viewed through this lens, the pose and gestures indicative of speech in Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* are also recognizable as the instruments through which Peter is being remolded in the image of Christ. The striking gesture of his right hand identifies Jesus as the divine *artifex*, whose incarnate divinity engineers the process of conversion that transforms Peter into an instrument of the Word or, better, conforms him to Christ, making him analogous to the supreme Fisher of Men. The *Glossa*, referring once again to the mystery of the Incarnation, underscores this analogy of fishers to Christ. The gloss on *Matthew* 4:18–19 affirms that *Christus piscaturus* – he who is 'about to fish' for men – was going forth to the places of fishing ('piscaturus per piscatoria vadit loca'). Since Jesus is God incarnate, he divinely saw with eyes of the flesh and the spirit, the fishermen whom he had foreseen from eternity. He now makes them known to their people and to us, showing how they are meant to fish for converts in the 'sea of the world' ('alijs quid essent ostendit').⁴¹ Ludolphus is clearly referring to the analogical image that Christ utilizes to fish for Peter, whose spiritual vocation he thereby enunciates and represents.

Peter and Andrew

The difference in Peter's response and Andrew's, more accurately, the distinction between Peter, who levels his gaze at Christ, and Andrew, who has yet to take notice of the Lord, closely corresponds to how the two brothers are characterized in the *Vita Christi* and the *Glossa*. The *Glossa*, in its reading of *Matthew* 4:18, elucidates the significance of the names Simon Petrus and Andreas, citing Bede's *Commentary on Matthew*. Bede states that 'Petrus', as the doctors agree, denotes obedience ('Petrum qui vocatur fortis'), whereas 'Andreas' denotes strength ('Andraeam qui voca-

⁴⁰ *Biblorum sacrorum cum glossa ordinaria* V, col. 492C: 'Dicendum quod humanitas Christi instrumentum erat divinitatis coniunctum, sicut manus est instrumentum artificis, et ideo sicut verbum Christi inquantum vox movebat aurem, ita inquantum instrumentum divinitatis movebat mentem'.

⁴¹ *Ibidem* V, col. 89B: 'Piscaturus per piscatoria vadit loca. Mystice. Cum incarnatus carnem suscepit, divinitus vidit in mari mundi piscatores: & alijs quid essent ostendit, quos ab aeterno praevidit'.

tur fortis'): without the former, nothing penetrates ('quia sine obedientia nullus intrat'); without the latter, nothing endures ('sine fortitudine nullus perseverat').⁴² That Vellert's Peter looks up would connote, in Bede's conception, his tractability, and more than this, the degree to which, having caught sight of Christ, he allows the image of the Lord to enter into his eyes, mind, and heart [Fig. 1]. Andrew, by contrast, persists in looking to his nets, in what is perhaps an allusion to the tenacity and assiduity he applies to any task. The glossator formulates a corollary distinction that can likewise be brought to bear on Peter and Andrew: with reference to the phrase, 'they were casting their net' ('mittentes rete in mare'), he differentiates between those who cling to terrestrial affairs, taking hold of any advantage, and those who instead heed the call to embrace celestial longings. As he puts it: 'For [Jesus] considers those who oft gaze with eagerness at earthly riches, calling them to heavenly desires'.⁴³ In keeping with this dichotomy, Andrew would be the person still gazing keenly at material things, whereas Peter sets his sights higher, looking to Christ. Still holding his net, he actively shifts focus, so that the attention given to fishing, now transfers to the source of the analogy of fishing, borne in on Peter.

The *Vita Christi* singles Peter out as the disciple who most humbly and fervently desired to set eyes on Christ, upon first hearing about him (from Andrew). Ludolphus amplifies the exchange between Christ and Simon Peter, recorded in *John* 1:42, imagining what lay implicit in their first brief conversation. Ludolphus speaks, as if he were addressing Peter: 'Justly are you called Simon the son of Ioanna, or Bar-iona. For Simon signifies "obedient". Ioanna, "grace". Bar, "son", and Ioana, "dove". As if [Jesus] were saying: "You are an obedient son of grace", or, "son of the dove, that is, of the Holy Spirit, since you received humility by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and for that reason desired to see me, when Andrew called you [to me]"'.⁴⁴ In chapter 30, Ludolphus reflects on the discipleship of

⁴² Ibidem V, col. 89A: 'Petrus, agnoscens. Andreas, virilis, quod doctoribus convenit, quia hi soli magisterio sunt apti, qui sapientiae luce illustrantur, & praeceptis Dei obediunt, & aliis viriliter suggerunt. Bene primum Petrum qui vocatur obediens & Andream qui vocatur fortis, ponit, quia sine obedientia nullus intrat, sine fortitudine nullus perseverat, & hae germanae sunt virtutes'. Cf. Bede, *Complete Works* 254.

⁴³ *Bibliorum sacrorum cum glossa ordinaria* V, col. 89B: 'Quia quos saepe terrenis lucris inhiare considerat, caelestibus desiderijs advocat, & per eos retibus evangelij alios de profundo iniquitatis eripit'.

⁴⁴ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 121, col. 2B: 'Merito Simon filius Ioanna seu Bar-iona dicitur, sive vocatur. Simon enim interpretatur obediens. Ioanna, gratia: Bar, filius: & Iona, columba: quasi ei diceret: Tu es obediens filius gratiae. Vel filius

Peter, James, and John, asking what made them exceptional followers of Christ. He finds a ready answer in Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, where Peter, James, and John are commended for their steadfast gaze that attaches them inseparably to Christ: 'He who is a monk desires to imitate the apostolic life. Do you wish, o monk, to be a disciple of Christ, nay rather, to be a disciple of his disciples? Then do what Peter did, and also James and John: each had a wandering eye ('oculum scandalizantem'); each had a father, boat, and net. Yet, when Jesus spoke to them, saying, come follow me, they drew back their gaze, and followed Jesus [solely]'.⁴⁵ The fact that Peter, not Andrew, watches Jesus in Vellert's print, nicely matches the notion that his eyes, once fixed on the Lord, remained steadfast. For Peter, who finally abjures family and possessions when he is called for the third time, the act of beholding qualifies as the principal attribute of his burgeoning vocation.

In gazing at Christ, Peter himself functions as an exemplary image of all true Christians, as well as of the Church, as Ludolphus avers. In chapter 28, "On the First Public Sermon of the Lord Jesus", which serves as a preface to chapter 29, "On the Second and Third Calling of the Disciples", he advises us to learn from the *vocationes* recounted in the Gospels, not least the calling of Peter, that we must look intently at Christ, if we are to transfer our hearts to him, who is the author of our faith. Ludolphus is counseling all true followers of Christ to keep his image always on view to the eyes of the spirit. Jesus's life of public service, his gospel ministry, extending from the miracle at Cana to the Ascension, was relatively short, implies Ludolphus, because he wished his disciples to resort to the image of him, imprinted upon their hearts:

In order that [the disciples] might become amenable to the spirit, he arranged to withdraw himself from them, in the form and flesh of a servant, lest they love him only carnally. For the Lord, having subdued the world, wished his disciples wholly to translate their spirit heavenward, that thusly

columbae, id est Spiritus sancti, quia humilitatem de gratia Spiritus sancti accepisti, ut vocante Andrea, videre me desiderares'.

⁴⁵ Ibidem 139–140, cols. 2E–1A: 'Monachus apostolicam vitam desiderat imitari. Vis o monache esse discipulus Christi, immo vis discipulorum eius esse discipulus? Fac quod fecit Petrus, quod fecit Iacobus & Ioannes: Habebant oculum scandalizantem; patrem, & navem, & rete. Dicit eis Iesus, venite sequimini me, absconditur oculus, & hi sequuntur Iesum'. Cf. Chrysostom John, "In evangelium Matthaei, Vae mundo, homilia XVIIJ", in *Divi Ioannis Chrysostomi Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani operum tomus secundus: Ea complectens, quae faciunt ad elucidationem Matthaei, Marci, & Lucae, quatenus haberi potuerunt*. (Paris, s.n.: 1588), col. 1017.

they too might more easily prove capable of defeating the world. We, too, if we likewise transfer our heart to our [true] fatherland, and, wishing to follow the way of the Lord, contemplate the author of our faith, then shall we find ourselves capable of disdaining the word and triumphing over it.⁴⁶

Vellert's Peter, seen in this way, epitomizes the passage of the eyes and heart from the world to Jesus, from engagement in the maritime occupation of fishing, to engagement with Christ, source of the piscine analogy for evangelical ministry.

For Ludolphus, the second and third callings of Peter progressively and intensively transform him: he becomes like unto an image of the Church ('*Ecclesia, cuius ipse typum tenet*'), hooked by the word of God ('*sicut hamus [...] verbum Dei capit hominem*'), caught in the evangelical net cast by Christ ('*ipsum verbum mente eius teneatur*').⁴⁷ Cherished by the Church it signifies, this Petrine image carries a heavy weight of functions – representational and hermeneutic. It illustrates the paradox of the universal Church's founding, not in the trappings of material wealth, power, and glory, but in something richer, more powerful, and glorious – in the divine virtue that flows from the wisdom of God: '[Jesus] chose unlettered men, low in the world's esteem, and fashioned them into teachers; sending them forth to preach, he brought into subjection the rulers of the world, that the faith of believers might be thought to reside in the power of God, not the wisdom and power of men'.⁴⁸ Peter not only 'bears the image of

⁴⁶ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 135, cols. 1E–2A: 'quia ut capaces spiritus fierent, expediebat quod caro & forma servi ab eis auferetur, ne adhuc carnaliter eum diligerent. Ipse enim Dominus qui mundum vicit, voluit ut discipuli animum totum ad caelum transferrent, quia sic & ipsi faciliter vincere mundum possent. Nos quoque similiter, si ad patriam nostram cor transponimus, & ad principem fidei nostrae inspicientes, viam eius sequi volumus, facilius adversa & prospera mundi contemnere, & ipsum mundum vincere poterimus'.

⁴⁷ Ibidem 137, col. 1B–C.

⁴⁸ Ibidem 239, col. 2B: 'elegit illiteratos & mundo despectos, hosque doctores faciens, & ad praedicandum mittens, per eos subiecit mundi rectores, ne fides credentium putaretur non in virtute Dei, sed in sapientia & virtute hominum'. Cf. ibidem 123, col. 1A: 'Voluit enim Christus, apostolos primos fundatores ecclesiae, idiotas & simplices homines eligere: ne doctrina fidei, & prima conversio hominum humanae sapientiae ascriberetur, sed divinae'. The same claim is made emphatically in *Dleven des heren*, fol. L recto: 'Hadde Jesus grote heren ende hoch geleerde mannen tot zijn discipulen ghenomen, men soude mogen seggen dat onse geloove ingestelt ware met tijtlike macht ende wereltlike wijsheyt. Ende nu is te merken dat ons gheloove alleen op die ewighe wijsheyt ende mogentheyt gods gefundeert is'. ['Had Jesus chosen for disciples men of noble birth and high learning, one might have said that our faith was established in temporal authority and worldly wisdom. But now, it may be seen, that our faith is solely founded on eternal wisdom and the power of God'.]

the Church', but also other images: through him, the order of election (that is, of calling to evangelical service) is displayed ('quando eligendus praedicatur, totusque facti huius ordo [...] hic ostenditur'); the minister of the Gospel, humble preacher of the Word, is figured ('figuratur praedicator Evangelij, quia propriae innitens virtuti nihil proficit'); the capture of new converts by the modest clergyman, his netting of captivated disciples, is given to be seen ('datur intelligi, quod in praedicatione vel exhortatione capta multitudo hominum, praedicator debet se Deo humiliare').⁴⁹ We can apply this reading of Peter to Vellert's print, as follows: what we are witness to in the *Calling of Peter and Andrew* is not simply the formulation by Christ of the analogy of fishing, but also the exegetical effect of this analogical image, which allows Peter to be construed as a propagator of images having to do with the Church's vocation of fishing for men. The scriptural account of the callings of Peter, in other words, provide a warrant for the exegetical parsing of Peter – his hands on the net, his eyes fixed on Christ – as a symbolic image of the Church, its fisher-ministers, and its piscatorial mission of catching souls.

The Tropes of Walking and Turning

The figure of Christ, as noted above, does not stand fixed on the shore: he motions to Peter and turns toward him. The Dutch and Latin editions of the *Vita Christi* place a premium on the dual action of calling and turning, executed by Christ. Conversely, in Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, this simultaneity is answered by the twofold activity of Peter, who turns to face Jesus, even while continuing to fish [Fig. 1]. That Peter, like Jesus, jointly performs two actions, suggests the reciprocal nature of their mutual interaction. In *Dleven ons heeren*, the shared imagery of turning – of *roepen* and *navolgen* – firstly signifies mercy made visible. 'Ludolphus' refers to *John* 1:38, 'And Jesus turning, and seeing them following him, saith to them, "What see you?"': 'In this calling of the disciples and their following of Christ, one may devoutly observe how the merciful Lord, turning himself toward them with compassion, desired their salvation and that of all men, for he eternally turns toward them who turn themselves toward him. And also, how Jesus, looking at the disciples in search of him, with the eyes of mercy and compassion spoke, bolstering their faith and confidence in

⁴⁹ Ibidem 137, col. 1C.

him'.⁵⁰ The benign image that Jesus puts forth, and 'Ludolphus' invites us to envision, represents the benefits of discipleship, more specifically, of penitence, to all true Christian followers, who are thus reassured that their efforts to imitate Christ shall be amply rewarded: 'Herein we are given to understand that Christ readily assists and sympathizes with all those who trust in him, hope for his mercy, and begin to follow him with a pure heart'.⁵¹ As a token of assistance rendered, the Lord turns his face toward the humble supplicant, an assertion made with equal force in the *Vita Christi*. Alluding to the icon of the Holy Face, Ludolphus states that the Lord obliges all true votaries, granting access to 'his godly countenance'. What Christ bestows on followers who engage in good works is ingress to himself, mediated by iconic and meditative images of his lively and longed-for visage: 'But concerning the fact that Jesus turned himself toward the disciples who followed him, Theophilus comments: "Unless you imitate Christ with good works, you shall neither attain to the vision of his holy face, nor ever come into his house"'.⁵²

The *Vita Christi* extensively develops the trope of turning: the Lord, asserts Ludolphus, when he turned to look and to speak, was bestowing, then and for all time, an image addressed to the disciples and to us their beneficiaries ('in quo datur nobis intelligi'). This image demonstrates the purity of its recipients ('puro corde'), the clemency and philanthropy of its donator ('clementiae & bonae voluntatis est indicium'), his thirsting after the salvation of the human race ('sitiens eorum & omnium salutem conversus ad eos'), and his willingness to confer divine grace and spiritual instruction in exchange for attention devoutly paid to the word of God: 'And hearing [the word of God], they ought piously to take in what is preached, and the Lord Jesus benignly turns to such men, receives them in grace, and instructs them in what is necessary to be saved: whence is

⁵⁰ *Dleven des heren* (1521), fol. XLIIJ recto: 'In dit ootmoedige roepen ende navolgen, der discipulen Christi, so is devotelijc te aenmercken, hoe die goedertieren heere begeerde zijnder discipulen ende alre menschen salicheyt, hem selven tot hen keerende wt zijn goedertierenheyt, die hem altijt keert totten ghenen die haer tot hem keeren. Ende hoe Jesus met die ogen zijnre goedertierenheit ende ontfermherticheyt, aensiende zijn discipulen hem naevolgende tot hen seyde om betrouwe ende coenheyt tot hemwaerts te gheven'.

⁵¹ Ibidem: 'Hier in wort ons te verstaen ghegeven dat Christus al den ghenen die hem met puerder herten beginnen na te volgen betrouwen heeft ende hope zijnder ontfermherticheit dat hi bereit is hen te helpen ende te ontfermen'.

⁵² Ibidem: 'Ten si dat ghi bi goede wercken Christum na volcht, ghi en sult niet gheraken totten aenscouwen zijns godliken aensichts, noch in zijn huys comen mogen'.

supplied the fruit of testimony'.⁵³ The similitude of turning couches giving and receiving in the form of a visual analogy between Jesus, who gives himself to those he receives, and his followers, who receive him into their hearts, giving themselves to Jesus. The mutual acknowledgment given and received bears fruit publicly in a strengthening of faith, as the metaphorical phrase *fructus testimonij* indicates. This figurative usage can easily be applied to Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, in particular, to the way he represents their bilateral interaction. Like Ludolphus, Vellert illustrates the analogy of fishing by recourse to the analogy of turning, implicitly inscribing both analogies under the rubric of *conversio*, or alternatively, *verwandeling* – the turning of souls, being initiated by Christ, the fishing for men, being espoused by Peter.

The reference to transit in *Matthew* 4:18 ('Ambulans autem Iesus iuxta mare Galilaeae') authorizes the complementary trope of walking, which Ludolphus closely ties to the trope of turning. Vellert's Christ, his left foot forward, left knee bent, and mantle raised to facilitate movement, has apparently perambulated to the small headland, from where he addresses Peter and Andrew. Two trees bracket Christ, marking stages in his journey toward the two brothers: rooted in rocky ground, a barren tree rises from the shore behind him, its branches leafless and withered, its skeletal profile partly camouflaged by densely layered clouds, against which the tree is silhouetted. The other tree, rooted in fertile soil, rises from the opposite shore, its leafy canopy sharply silhouetted against clear sky. Aligned to Peter, this tree gives him added prominence, extending the vertical axis that points up his position and importance within the image. The obscurity of the dead tree behind Jesus and clarity of the live tree above Peter establish the antipodes, whence he departs, and whither he advances, en route from Capharnaum to Peter and Andrew on the Sea of Galilee. Obscurity and clarity are age-old antitheses for the Old Law and the New, respectively designated a 'shadow of the good things to come' and the 'very image of the[se] things', in *Hebrews* 10:1. Read in this light, the motion of Christ from one tree to the other, figuratively enacts the transition from the old covenant to the new, and signals that Peter is now being called to the new ministry of Gospel.

⁵³ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 120, col. 1D–E and 1C: '& audientes debent devote recipere talem praedicationem, & dominus Iesus ad tales convertitur per clementiam, & recipit per gratiam, & eos instruit de necessarijs ad salutem: unde subditur fructus testimonij'.

The two trees, taken separately, also recall the many scriptural places having to do with a verdant tree or a barren one. Every one of these *loci scripturae* has relevance to the calling of Peter. In *Luke* 13:6–9, for example, the parable of the fruitless fig tree, more expressly, of its vintner and dresser, serves to epitomize the loving and solicitous minister, who refuses to abandon the recalcitrant sinner. Even after the lord of the vineyard orders that the barren fig be felled, the dresser lets it alone for another year, dresses and dungs it, in hope that the tree may bear fruit – in expectation that the reprobate may repent and be saved. The barren tree, on this account, is like the catch to be netted by the evangelical fisher of men, whose counterpart is the appetent dresser. Jesus causes a fig tree to wither, then interprets it as a sign of the power of prayer, in *Matthew* 21:18–22 and *Mark* 11:12–14, 11:20–25. In cursing the fig tree, Jesus stages a parabolic event that teaches how strength of faith, made manifest through prayer, can achieve anything: ‘And Jesus answering, said to them: “Amen, I say to you, if you shall have faith, and stagger not, not only this of the fig tree shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain, ‘Take up and cast thyself into the sea’, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive”’. The fruitless fig is specifically associated with Peter, who asks Jesus to explain its significance in *Mark* 11: 21: ‘And Peter remembering, said to him: “Rabbi, behold the fig tree, which thou didst curse, is withered away”’. Accordingly, Vellert’s gnarled and bare-branched tree has purchase on Peter, whose faith and prayerful devotion it presages by reference to the parabolic usage of Christ.

The full-canopied tree, planted on the lakeshore, and towering above Peter, may similarly be interpreted as an allusion to his Christian virtue, especially the spiritual fidelity he will henceforth display. It also alludes, in the imagery of *Jeremiah* 17:7–10, to the transparency of Peter’s soul to Christ: ‘Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his confidence. And he shall be as a tree that is planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots towards moisture [...]. And the leaf thereof shall be green [...]. I am the Lord who search the heart, and prove the reins: who give to every one according to his way, and according to the fruit of his devices’. This prophecy begs to be applied to Peter, whose heart is proved by the call he receives from Jesus, and who, according to his way and devices – that is, the vocation of fisher of men – shall bear fruit for Christ. He is in this sense the living counterpart to the Jeremian tree, the fullness and verdancy of which stand for his future relationship with Christ. The tree on the far shore evokes a further parable – that of the summertime fig tree – recounted by Jesus in *Matthew* 24:32–35, *Mark* 13:28–31, and

Luke 21:29–33. Here the arboreal similitude constructs an analogy between the tree's unfurling canopy that announces the approach of summer, and the terrestrial and celestial signs that announce the imminence of the Son of Man's coming: 'And from the fig tree learn a parable. When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors'. The parable is eschatological, but its core thematic – the advent of Christ, how he is known, how he is to be met – applies equally to the encounter between Peter (who already knows Jesus, but now definitively recognizes him as the Christ) and the Lord (who calls Peter to save and be saved). This *similitudo*, as the Lucan account states, concerns the visual signs of the Lord's coming, which are no less discernible to the eyes, than the leafy harbingers of summer.⁵⁴ The tree, then, is readable as an allusion to Peter's visual discernment of Christ at the very moment when the Lord, drawing nigh, comes in search of him.

The analogy between Peter and the summertime fig, complements that between Peter and the bare-branched fig, and both analogies correlate to the larger analogy, again devised by Christ, on which Vellert's image turns, namely, that between fishing and fishing for men. The densely imbricated fabric of analogy places this rhetorical figure at the center of Jesus's evangelical ministry, and strongly implies that such visual similitudes are central to the task at hand, which is to captivate new converts, persuading them to embrace the Gospel and accept the supplantation of the Old Law. Like the barren tree, the verdant tree operates in the manner of the rubrics, or, better, topical headings, that organized contemporary commonplace-books.⁵⁵ They attract to themselves various scriptural passages that then function interactively as mutual points of reference. Just as the verdant tree is aligned to Peter, and literally coordinated to his activity of fishing, so too, as a Petrine analogue, is it harmonized to the combined simile and metaphor of fishing, which itself functions analogically. These parallel analogies cluster under the notional heads of conversion, discipleship, and gospel ministry.

At the base of the green tree, there sits an empty boat, its oars upended onto the stern, its prow nestled against the shore. The spitting image of Peter and Andrew's fishing boat, this deserted craft serves as a prolepsis

⁵⁴ *Luke* 21:29: 'et dixit illis similitudinem, videte ficulneam et omnes arbores'.

⁵⁵ On the commonplace-book model of reading, knowing, and interpreting, see Moss A., *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: 1996) 101–214.

that anticipates how they (and James and John) will shortly thereafter answer the call of Christ (*Matthew* 1:19): 'And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him'. *Dleven* likewise utilizes the image of abandoned possessions, to accentuate the intensity of the disciples' third and final conversion:

For a third time, they were called, at that same Lake of Galilee, to the shore of which the Lord Jesus had come, and this time, the aforesaid disciples, having been called, left behind all they possessed, never again to return to temporal and terrestrial matters. Instead, as has previously been mentioned, they henceforth followed the Lord Jesus in willing poverty, listening closely to his words and godly instruction, learning about the mystery of Godhead, observing his miracles, and afterwards learning to bear witness before lords and monarchs, pagans and Jews, and to certify the Christian faith.⁵⁶

The empty boat therefore signifies the transition from one kind of fishing to another, from the register of the actual to that of the spiritual.

Still aligned to Peter, the block of stone at the base of the image, one side nearly contiguous to the foot of Christ, elicits another group of scriptural passages pertinent to the calling of Peter. The notion that Christ is the cornerstone of faith and foundation stone of the Church comes from *Psalms* 117:22: 'The stone which the builders rejected; the same is become the head of the corner'. Its presence alongside Jesus, and on axis with Peter, implies that Simon the son of Iona, dubbed 'Cephas' and 'Petrus' (that is, 'rock' or 'stone') in *John* 1:42, shall himself become a building block of the Christian edifice, and more than this, is destined for preeminence amongst its co-builders. The same idea is made explicit in *Matthew* 16:18, where Christ avers: 'That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church'. In *Ephesians* 2:19–22, Paul develops the architectural imagery of *Psalms* 117, praising Christ as the cornerstone of a building, whose blocks are 'fellow citizens', 'saints', and the 'domestics of God': 'Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord'. Paul is also clearly thinking of

⁵⁶ *Dleven des heren* (1521), fol. L recto: 'Ten derden zijn si gheroepen aen dat selve meyr van Galileen daer de here Jesus aen den oever des meyrs ginc, ende op die tijt hebben dese voerseide discipulen gheroepen zijnde, al achter ghelaten dat si hadden, niet wederkeerende tot tijtlike ende aertsche dingen, mer altijt zijn si den heere Jesum in willige armoede naghevolcht, als vore geroert is, zijn woerden ende godlike leeringen horende ende die heymelicheyt der godheyt lerende ende zijn miraculen siende, van welcken si namaels voer heeren ende vorsten heydenen ende Joden getuychnisse gheven souden te leeren, ende te vestigen dat kersten gheloove'.

Isaiah 28:16, the prophecy that underlies the reference to Christ as cornerstone in *Luke* 20:17: 'Behold I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tarried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation'. Positioned above the stone in the plane of the image, Peter is as if 'raised' upon the foundation laid by Christ. The analogy of stone-dressed construction thus 'builds' upon the complementary analogies – piscine and arboreal – that Vellert layers into the *Calling of Peter and Andrew*. That the block seems almost to collide with Christ's left foot, perhaps alludes to another lapidary image – that of the stumbling block – introduced by Paul to characterize insufficient faith, in *1 Corinthians* 1:23–24. This version of the stone counterposes it, as a figure of Christ, to the figures of Petrine faith that proliferate elsewhere in the print, the valences of which, being largely positive, are pointed up through antithesis: Christ is 'unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God'.

Placed by the water's edge, the block doubles as a boundary stone, marking the end of Jesus's journey through Galilee and along the Sea of Galilee. As such, it allows us to circle back to the trope of walking that both Vellert and Ludolphus accentuate in their respective accounts of the calling of Peter. When Jesus calls Peter for the third time, states Ludolphus, he is bidden to follow in the Lord's footsteps, treading the path of ministry Christ has forged. He heeds the call of Christ by choosing to walk with him: 'And he says to them: "Come ye after me, in affection and imitation, and just as I walk, do ye also, and I shall make you fishers of men", not of prebends, nor again of tithes, but of souls; for [the disciples] drew fish, that is, men, from out of the deep sea of infidelity, onto the shore of salvation, through the net of holy preaching'.⁵⁷ Christ calls Peter away from his quotidian occupation, in order to demonstrate that the Christian vocation of 'following', of 'walking after' ('sequelam suam'), trumps all others. Ludolphus paraphrases from Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*: 'He called them while they were midway through their labors, and thereby showed that following him ought to be preferred over all other tasks; ergo anyone appointed to be fisher or pastor in the Church,

⁵⁷ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 137, col. 2C–D: 'Et ait illis: Venite post me affectu & imitatione, & quemadmodum ego ambulo & vos ambulate, & faciam vos piscatores hominum, non praebendarum, non decimarum, sed animarum: quia per rete sanctae praedicationis pisces, id est homines, de profundo pelagi, id est, infidelitatis ad lucem fidei traxerunt, quasi ad littus salutis'.

ought very much to fear lest he fail to follow the Lord in perfection of following, which is to deny oneself and take up his cross'.⁵⁸

The type of following Ludolphus envisages consists in matching Jesus step for step ('*Dominum eius vestigia sequendo*'), imitating his works ('*eius opera imitando*'), upholding his virtues ('*eius virtutes tenendo*'), and accompanying him in mind and heart ('*mente & dilectione sequamur eum*').⁵⁹ Ludolphus presupposes that Peter, when he answered the summons to refashion himself in the image of Christ, was attending to the significance of the 'Lord's coming and going' ('*transitus eius*'). His response is apt, for Jesus stages his passage through Galilee as an image to be beheld and interpreted. In fleeing to Galilee, where he eludes Herod and escapes the fate of John the Baptist, Jesus generates an exemplary image that teaches his followers, whenever possible, to avoid persecution and danger ('*ut nobis fugiendi persecutores & periculum formam praeberet*'), prefigures the passing of the covenant from Jews to Gentiles ('*ut verbi Dei transitum a Iudaeis ad gentes, praefiguret*'), and instructs the disciples 'what they shall effect and when' ('*ex hoc discipulos, quid quandoque facturi essent instrueret*').⁶⁰ He also puts forward, for those capable of discerning it, an allegory of preaching: 'Mystically, from this – that Jesus, before he preached publicly, came to Galilee – may be inferred that the preacher of the Gospel ought first to migrate from the carnal to the spiritual, from terrestrial matters to meditation on heavenly concerns'.⁶¹ The premium placed on the image of the ambulatory *transitus Iesu* provides an exegetical context, within which to situate Vellert's depiction of Christ in motion, arrayed between evident markers of his passage from one place to another. For Vellert, as for Ludolphus, the imagery of transit closely connects to that of calling. Christ is observed to evangelize by 'going to see' ('*visitando*') those whom he proselytizes, or as Ludolphus puts it: 'from both peoples, Jewish and Gentile, he mercifully called many to the

⁵⁸ Ibidem 137, col. 2D: 'in medijs autem operationibus existentes eos vocavit, monstrans quod omnibus occupationibus sequelam suam praeponere oportet, cum ergo quis praeficitur Ecclesiae piscator & pastor, valde debet timere ne non sequatur Dominum perfectione sequelae, quae est, ut semetipsum abneget & crucem suam tollat'. Cf. Prevost (trans.), *Homilies of S. John Chrysostom* I 191.

⁵⁹ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 138, col. 2B.

⁶⁰ Ibidem 134, col. 1A.

⁶¹ Ibidem 134, col. 1D: 'Mystice, per hoc quod Iesus antequam publice praedicaret venit in Galilaeam, insinuat quod praedicator Evangelij prius debet transmigrare de carnalibus ad spiritualia, de terrenis ad meditandum caelestia'.

faith by going to see them'.⁶² That Vellert places his monogram, 'D*V', on the boundary stone, and inscribes it with the print's date of completion, '1523 MEY 30', perhaps associates the theme of Christ's going forth to see and be seen, with that of the viewer's coming forth to peruse this pictorial exemplum of *transitus* and *vocatio*.⁶³ The stone posits a double boundary, for it delimits the outermost threshold of the Lord's journey toward Peter, and also demarcates the vantage point from which we scrutinize the crucial encounter between Peter *piscator* and Christ *piscator Petri*. Like Peter, we learn how one becomes a *piscator hominum*, by closely watching how the Lord fishes for his disciple.

Conclusion: Spiritual Discernment and the Turbulent Sea

Peter gazes up at the face of Jesus, who even as he returns Peter's gaze, seems to stare inwardly, fixing his own eye on matters interior to himself [Fig. 1]. He addresses Peter, and yet engages in introspection. The ambiguity of this effect, which hinges on the equivocal rendering of the silhouetted pupil and iris, is one of Vellert's most subtle pictorial devices. It allows him to suggest, in line with Ludolphus, that Jesus jointly communicates in an external and an internal fashion. These two modes of communication, the one overt and plainly observable, the other private and subtly adapted to the workings of mind and heart, correlate to the two ways in which the circumstances of calling are presented both by Ludolphus and Vellert – *literaliter*, literally, apparently, from without, and *mystice*, spiritually, figuratively, from within. These terms are of course exegetical: they respectively denote the extrinsic and intrinsic, or alternatively, the ordinary and figurative meanings of the persons and things described in the image. Ludolphus, in his account of all three callings of Peter, takes great pains to emphasize that Jesus casts his gaze not only *ad literam*, beholding the superficies of what is visible, but also *per*

⁶² Ibidem 138, col. 1A: 'quia de utroque populo multos misericorditer visitando ad fidem vocavit'.

⁶³ The monogrammed boundary stone perhaps signifies Vellert's adherence to Christ, whereas the second monogram, inscribed on the stern of Peter and Andrew's boat, above the rudder, indicates that he closely identifies with the disciples, whom Jesus is calling. The rudder takes the shape of the cross, thus alluding to the sacrificial nature of the vocation Peter and Andrew are urged to espouse. The signature on the stern in fact consists of two monograms that mirror each other: this may allude to the notion that Peter, in fishing for men, becomes a mirror-image of the fisher Christ.

revelationem alterius occulti – ‘through the revelation of that which lies concealed in others’ – discerning what is submerged or hidden, even from his interlocutors, and bringing these secrets to light.⁶⁴ Ludolphus states, for instance, about the first meeting of Jesus and Nathanael: ‘And with the eyes of love, he beheld, more internally than externally, Nathanael coming toward him; for he saw not merely his bodily exterior, but also the interior of his heart’.⁶⁵ With reference to the third and final calling of Peter, Ludolphus makes much the same claim: ‘Walking alongside the Sea of Galilee, he once again saw Peter and Andrew, both corporeally and spiritually, looking more into their hearts than at their faces’.⁶⁶ It is this form of looking, directed to the eyes and to the heart, that Vellert describes.

For Ludolphus, and as I would argue, for Vellert, the example set by Christ licenses what one might call exegetical vision: this involves viewing things both superficially and profoundly, seeing them as they appear to be, and then gauging what these appearances convey figuratively, when interpreted spiritually as figures of rhetoric. These registers of apparency and figuration operate in tandem, as Christ evinces by looking simultaneously at what is outside and inside, what is visible to the eyes of the body and to the eyes of the spirit, and discerning their interconnection. The chief conduit of the interrelation between the two senses of *figura* – outward appearance and figure of speech or thought – is, of course, the analogy, the figurative device that utilizes simile and metaphor to compare two things and explore the nature and scope of their mutual likeness. We might put this as follows: since the analogical relation between fishing and fishing for men constitutes the subject of Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew*, the print in fact reveals how literal and figurative imagery complement one another, and moreover, how this relation, in its form, function, and meaning, is central to the vocation of discipleship and to the evangelical ministry of the Word. Its fundamental subject, in other words, is the warrant given by Christ to analogy as a privileged instrument of rhetorical image-making, put forward to secure conversion.

In the engraving, the conspicuous presence of somewhat anomalous features, such as the living tree and the dead tree, the abandoned skiff,

⁶⁴ Ibidem 122, col. 2A.

⁶⁵ Ibidem 122, col. 1E: ‘Et vidit Iesus, intuitu dilectionis, Nathanaelem ad se venientem, & magis intus quam extra appropinquantem: quia non solum vidit corpus exterius, sed etiam cor ipsius interius’.

⁶⁶ Ibidem 137, col. 2C: ‘Ambulans Iesus iuxta mare Galilaeae, iterum vidit Petrum & Andream, non tam corporaliter quam spiritualiter, & magis ad corda quam ad faciem respiciens’.

and the sea's roiling surface, indicates that these plausible appurtenances of man and nature are also analogues – analogical devices susceptible to figurative elaboration. Take the sea, for example, the agitated surface of which churns so strikingly around the boat. The water, viewed *literaliter*, is self-evidently agitated by the tugging motion of Peter and Andrew's net, as well as by the writhing of the ensnared fish. But the waves also bilow analogically, as *Dleven* animadverts in a moralizing digression: 'By the aforesaid sea or lake of Galilee, the world is spiritually to be understood, which swells with pride, foams with impurity, and engulfs with greed and gluttony'.⁶⁷ The *Vita Christi* develops this same conceit, embedding it within the community of analogies licensed by the central and forceful analogy of fishing. The latter analogy, since it originates from Christ, is stronger than the collateral ones it authorizes. The figure's strength consists in the ontological identity of its opposing terms – fishing and fishing for men – that remain precisely equivalent in action, solely differing in intention, whereas the corollary analogies comprise distinct, though commensurable, counterparts. Ludolphus cites Chrysostom's *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew: Homily 7*:

And he called them to himself, that they might pass over from fishing for fish to fishing for men. According to Chrysostom, fishers are elected because they foretell the grace of their future employment, by the office of their [present] labor; and, their piscatorian function having been altered for the best, they are converted from terrestrial to celestial fishing, in order that they might snatch the human race, like fish, from the deep abyss of error, unto salvation. [...] Behold, the intention is changed, not the fishing (ecce quod mutatur intentio non piscatio), [whereas] the nets are changed into doctrine, cupidity into love of souls, the sea into the world, the boat into the Church, the fish into men good and bad. In these things, an image is given (in his autem datur forma) to all those who wish to follow Christ [...] and we are shown that neither fleshly will nor transient desire, or affection of the blood, ought to restrain us from following Christ, for true adherents of Christ, having abandoned the snares of sin, the ship of possessions, and likewise their parents, as also the carnal passions, follow him with a ready spirit.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Dleven des heren* (1521), fol. L recto: 'Bij die voerseide zee oft meyr van Galileen wort geestelijc verstaen de werelt, die als een zee haer op heft overmits hoovertie, ende scuymt doer oncuysheyt, ende is verslindende doer ghiericheyt, ende gulsicheit'.

⁶⁸ Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Christi Domini Salvatoris nostri* 138, col. 1A–C: 'Et vocavit eos ad se, ut etiam de captura piscium transirent ad piscationem hominum. Secundum Chrysostomum, eliguntur piscatores, qui erant futurae dignitatis gratiam sui officij opere prophetantes, qui in melius mutato piscationis officio, de terrena piscatione ad coelestem translati sunt, ut humanum genus de profundo gurgite erroris, velut pisces caperent ad

On this account, the spiritual legibility of trees, boat, stone, and sea issues from the transformative analogy being conveyed by Christ and received by Peter. What Vellert portrays, then, in showing how Christ angles for Peter, and concurrently, how Peter nets his catch and catches sight of Christ, is the formation of the master trope that begets other visual analogies for the establishment of the Gospel and the Church. Taken together, these images represent the vocation to which Peter is called, paying homage to his conversion *ad piscationem hominum*.

*Excursus: The Calling of Peter and Andrew in Erasmus's
Paraphrases on the Gospels*

Thus far, I have situated Vellert's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* within the meditative, exegetical context of *Dleven des heeren* and the *Vita Christi*. In closing, I want briefly to point out that many of Ludolphus's key tropes, not least the notion that Christ, in calling Peter, fashions him into an image of the exemplary Christian, were renewed and widely disseminated by Erasmus, in his *Paraphrases on the Gospels*, published between 1517 and 1524. The paraphrase on *Luke* 5:8–11, for example, firmly states that 'in Peter, Christ is wont to propound the image he wishes to imprint in everyone else's hearts' ('Petro, in quo solitus est proponere formam, quam volebat caeterorum omnium animis imprimi').⁶⁹ The image under discussion is that of the Lord's fishing, as imitated by Peter: 'Nor should you consider what your powers can effect, but instead, what I should wish to be fashioned. Everything shall have a good outcome, if you but trust in me. You wonder at the thing that transpired, in the [miraculous] draught of fishes. Yet that is trifling, that which is to come will be still more extraordinary,

salutem, [...] ecce quod mutatur intentio non piscatio, mutantur retia in doctrinam, cupiditas in amorem animarum, fit mare seculum, navis Ecclesia, pisces boni & mali homines, in his autem datur forma omnibus Christum sequi volentibus, [...] ostenditur nobis quod non voluntas carnalis, non cupiditas temporalis, nec affectio sanguinis nos retrahere debent a sequela Christi, quia perfecti sectatores Christi relictis retibus peccatorum, & navi possessionum, & etiam parentibus, quantum ad carnalem affectum, animo prompto sequuntur eum'. Cf. Kellerman J.A. (trans.) – Oden T.C. (ed.), *Ancient Christian Texts: Incomplete Commentary on Matthew (Opus imperfectum)*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: 2010) I 77–78.

⁶⁹ Erasmus Desiderius, *In Evangelium Lucae paraphrasis Erasmi Roterodami per auctorem recognita* (Basel, Johann Froben: 1526) 82.

at the time when you shall have begun to fish for men. For this manner of fishing, I have gathered you and your kinsmen'.⁷⁰

The paraphrase on *Matthew* 4:18–20 characterizes fishing as an art ('ars'), the image of which follows from and complements the prefatory image Christ has just disseminated of his going forth into Galilee ('Christo iam tum sub hac imagine').⁷¹ This latter image is admonitory, for by it, he threatens to remove the Gospel from the disbelieving Jews, and to shine its light on the more receptive Gentiles. Erasmus tropes preaching as a kind of image-making: evangelical truth, he avers, portrays with uncommon clarity what the dark images of the Law merely shadowed forth: 'For the shadows of the Mosaic Law disperse before the brightest light of the Gospel, and this pertains to the images of the law ('ad legis typos') and to the truth portrayed ('expressam') by the Gospel'.⁷² In promising to teach Peter and Andrew a new *artem* that transcends their former trade, Christ, in Erasmus's reading, offers to initiate them into an unfamiliar theory and practice of art, one that has the power to propagate better and brighter images of salvation: 'And so Jesus interrupted the men, who were intent on the needs of the body, and said: "Follow me, and I will teach you an art that is certainly better than the one you learned from your father. Even so, you will not forsake your craft, but you will exchange it for a better art, for I will make you hereafter fishers of men, so that you who now with cunning snare little fish to their destruction, will catch people for their eternal salvation"'.⁷³ As Erasmus specifies, one kind of image cedes place to another: 'types' ('typos') are supplanted by the better art ('artem certe meliorem') that in turn trumps the harmless craft ('haec ars innoxia') they have heretofore been practicing.

⁷⁰ Ibidem: 'nec expendas, quid tuae possint vires, sed quid ego velim fieri. Nihil non succedet, si mihi fidas. Admiraris quod ita successerit res in captura piscium. Leve quidem hoc est, mirabilis succedet, ubi piscari coeperis homines. Ad hoc piscandi genus te delegi cum tuis socijs'.

⁷¹ Erasmus Desiderius, *Tomus primus Paraphraseon Des. Erasmi Roterodami, in Novum Testamentum, videlicet in quatuor Evangelia, & Acta apostolorum, nunc postremum ab autore non oscitanter recognitus* (Basel, Hieronymus Froben: 1535) 25.

⁷² Ibidem: 'Siquidem ad Evangelij clarissimam lucem, evanescunt umbrae legis Mosai-cae. Hoc quod attinet ad legis typos & expressam evangelio veritatem'.

⁷³ Simpson D. (trans.) – Sider R.D. (ed.), *Collected Works of Erasmus: Paraphrase on Matthew* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 2008) 80–81. Cf. Erasmus, *Tomus primus Paraphraseon* 26: 'Itaque corporis intentos necessitati Iesus interpellans, me inquit sequamini & a me discetis artem, certe meliorem, quam a patre didicistis. Nec artem tamen deseretis, sed in melius commutabitis. Siquidem efficiam posthac ut sitis piscatores hominum: ut qui nunc pisciculis insidiamini in perniciem, homines capiat in salutem aeternam'. I have changed the translation of 'artem' in the first line, from 'craft' to 'art'.

The paraphrase on *Mark* 1:16–18 declares that the Lord Jesus, in calling Peter, exhibits a new kind of sacred image, shorn of the recondite figures and obscure enigmas favored by the Law and the prophets ('non est quod posthac expectetis figuras alias, aut aenigmata legis').⁷⁴ On the contrary, Christ replaces these dark allegories with a new visual type – the image of fishing – the meaning of which he then illuminates, in analogy to himself. As Peter is to his catch, so Christ, the fisher of Peter and Andrew, is to his future disciples; the image of Peter is made transparent to that of Christ, who is the source of the analogy drawn between them. Whereas the Law's types prefigure, but also obfuscate, the Christian mysteries they adumbrate, the new type Christ promulgates, coincides with the task he is seen to perform (his effort to captivate Peter) and attaches figuratively to the mission he is seen to discharge (fishing for disciples). The evangelical *typus* and the thing it typifies are virtually, perhaps veritably, equivalent; and besides, they are mutually representational, in that Peter figuratively represents what Christ is doing, and Christ represents to Peter what he is figuring: 'Fishing sustains the image of gospel ministry, which through the word of God draws mortals immersed in the darkness of ignorance and sordid cares of this world to the light of truth and the love of heavenly things. And so, for these fishers, Jesus first fished. "Come", he says, "follow me, for I shall cause you to become into fishers of men"'.⁷⁵

The paraphrase on *John* 1:37–42 similarly distinguishes between the image of the Law and the spiritual image with which Christ supplants it. John the Baptist is described as 'playing the part of an image of the law of Moses' ('nam legis Mosaicae typum gerebat Ioannes') that has 'come to its furthest limit' and can go no farther ('lex igitur quae iam ad summam lineam pervenerat').⁷⁶ According to Erasmus, this endpoint is now juxtaposed to the Gospel authored by Christ ('Christus Evangelicae professionis erat autor'). The phrase he uses – 'ad summam lineam

⁷⁴ Erasmus Desiderius, *In Evangelium Marci paraphrasis, per Des. Erasmus Roterodamum* (Basel, Hieronymus Froben: 1534) 40.

⁷⁵ Ibidem 41: 'Piscatura typum habebat Evangelici muneris, quod per sermonem dei, mortales immersos ignorantiae tenebris ac sordidis huius mundi curis, extrahit ad lucem veritatis, ac coelestium rerum amorem. Hos igitur piscantes, primum piscatus est Iesus. Venite, inquit, ac me sequimini: efficiam enim ut incipiat esse piscatores hominum'.

⁷⁶ Erasmus Desiderius, *D. Erasmi Roterodami Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Ioannem, ad illustrissimum principem Ferdinandum, per autorem recognita* (Basel, Johann Froben: 1524) 29: 'Iesus autem illinc haud procul inambulabat, idque factum est non sine mystica significatione rei. Nam legis Mosaicae typum gerebat Ioannes, Christus Evangelicae professionis erat autor. Lex igitur quae iam ad summam lineam pervenerat, stabat, veluti non propressura longius, sed mox cessatur, & Christo venienti cessura'.

pervenerat' – puns on the three meanings of *linea*: drawn line, fishing-line, and boundary. The venerable images propagated by the patriarchs, kings, and prophets must give way to the new images promulgated by Christ. In one reading of the term *lineam*, 'boundary', these images are said to have reached the outermost limit of their utility. In another reading, *linea* as 'drawn line', they are said to have exhausted their potential as instruments of representation: their capacity to delineate Christ the Lord has now come to an end, for Christ himself claims authorship over the gospel images to follow. Finally, in a third reading that alludes to *Matthew* 4:18–20, *Mark* 1:16–18, and *Luke* 5:8–11 – *linea* as 'fishing-line' – they are said to have lost the power of catching fish, that is, of fishing for men, since now that Christ has come, this task falls to him and his disciples. In fishing for men, the salvific image that Christ proffers is exceptionally candid, as Erasmus insists; Christ conceals nothing about himself from whomever he calls: 'When John caught sight of Jesus coming toward him, warned by the Spirit what was to be done, he turned to the people and pointed Jesus out to them, so that once he was known by sight to them too, they would become used to marveling at and loving him, and would follow him rather than John, seek his baptism rather than John's. For the purity of a heart full of the Holy Spirit shone forth even in Jesus' very eyes and face; he revealed himself by his very bearing and carriage'.⁷⁷ Erasmus adds that 'Simon [Peter] too was eager to see Jesus for himself'. Filled with references to sacred image-making, the *Paraphrases on the Gospels* therefore provide yet another framework for the analogical imagery of fishing, calling, and viewing, upon which Vellert, as I have tried to show, predicates his *Calling of Peter and Andrew*.

⁷⁷ Phillips J.E. (ed.-trans.), *Collected Works of Erasmus: Paraphrase on John* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1991) 30. Cf. Erasmus, *Paraphrasis in Evangelium secundum Ioannem* 27: 'Is admonitus spiritu, quid esset agendum, conspicatus Iesum venientem ad se, versus ad populum, digito demonstrat illis Iesum, ut iam de facie quoque notum mirari atque amare consuescerent, & illud potius quam se sequerentur, illius ambirent baptismum potius quam suum. Nam animi puritas spiritu sancto pleni, in ipsis etiam Iesu oculis, ipsoque vultu relucebat, ipso incessu, totoque corporis habitu semet exerebat'.

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THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST:
HERRI MET DE BLES'S VISUAL EXEGESIS AND EXPANDED TYPOLOGY

Michel Weemans

The abundant and inventive visual analogies in the *Typologische tafeleren uit het leven van Jezus* and the various editions of the *Speculum Salvationis* demonstrate the important role of the image as exegesis in Netherlandish culture of the early modern period, with a strong and fundamental emphasis placed on the exegetical process of typology.¹ They also remind us that typology is basically a formal comparison, a mode of thought that found in the visual arts its natural terrain. Erich Auerbach and several authors after him have stressed the material and visual dimensions of typology, the etymology of which – *typos* or *figura* – refers to the act of shaping or making.² The formal composition, a simple detail, a character, or a building strongly suggest the link between the shadow and its fulfillment: the anthropomorphic door of Sodom in flame announces the *Boca Inferna* from which Christ pulls souls of the deceased; the soldiers prostrating themselves before Ezekiel anticipate the three Magi in front of the child Jesus; Hur sitting on a bench and spat upon by a circle of executioners prefigures the humiliated Christ of the Passion; Prince Achior tied to a tree by the servant of Holophernes announces Christ scourged against the column. Typology in these images is often implemented by formal analogies that do not exist in the text, but rather, challenge us to

¹ On the *Typologische Tafeleren uit het leven van Jezu*, see Cardon B. – Lieven R. – Smeyers M. (eds.), *Typologische tafeleren uit het leven van Jezus: A Manuscript from the Gold Scrolls Group (Bruges, ca. 1440) in the Pierpont Morgan Library. An Edition of the Text, a Reproduction of the Manuscript, and a Study of the Miniatures* (Leuven: 1985). On the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, and on Netherlandish typological books, see Kloss E., *Speculum humanae salvationis. Ein niederländisches Blockbuch* (Munich: 1925); Verougstraete H. – Schoute R., “Le *Speculum humanae salvationis* considéré dans ses rapports avec la *Biblia pauperum* et le *Canticum canticorum*”, *De Gulden Passer* 52 (1975) 363–379; Cardon B., *Manuscripts of the Speculum humanae salvationis in the Southern Netherlands (ca. 1410–ca. 1470). A Contribution to the Study of 15th-Century Book Illumination and of the Function and Meaning of Historical Symbolism* (Leuven: 1996); Rosier B., *The Bible in Print: Netherlandish Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Leiden: 1997).

² Auerbach E., “Figura”, in idem, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, trans. R. Manheim (New York: 1959; reprint ed., Gloucester: 1973).

discern typological relationships in ways that words cannot.³ This model of explicit juxtaposition, common in engravings and illustrated books and also present in important stained glass windows, appears less frequently in paintings. Lucas Gassel's *Landscape with Christ Healing the Blind Man of Jericho*, for instance, shows in the far distance the tiny (pre)figure of Tobias carrying the miraculous fish that will cure his blind father.⁴ A more developed example is Gassel's version of the *Allegory of the Law and the Gospel* (after Cranach and Holbein),⁵ where the fundamentally typological figure of John the Baptist connects Elijah (the prophet who prefigures John) and Christ (whom John himself prefigures). An analogy connects John the Baptist, as a threshold figure, with the tree (dessicated on the side of the Law and alive on the side of the Gospel), which is the central axis from where a series of well known typological analogies issues. Herri met de Bles's landscapes also show examples of visual typology, especially in his various *Landscapes with the Sermon of John the Baptist*.⁶ The typology here is less explicit, and at the same time, it takes a more subtle and

³ Sixteenth century theologians already underlined this specifically visual dimension of the typology; see, for example, William Tyndale, "A Prologue to the Book of Leviticus", in Tyndale (ed. – trans.), *The Five Books of Moses* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser: 1530) 60, as quoted in Eck C. van, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2007) 175.

⁴ Lucas Gassel, *Landscape with Christ Healing the Blind Man of Jericho* (1540). Oil on wood, 48 × 70 cm. Private collection, The Netherlands.

⁵ On the *Allegory of Law and Grace* in sixteenth-century art, see Grossmann F., "A Religious Allegory by Hans Holbein the Younger", *The Burlington Magazine* 103 (1961) 491–494; Cottin J., "Loi et évangile chez Luther et Cranach", *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 76 (1996) 293–314; Koerner J.L., *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago – London: 1993); Reinitzer H., *Zur Typologie bei Luther und Lucas Cranach – Zum Blutstrahl der Gnade in der Kunst* (Münster: 1985); idem, *Gesetz und Evangelium: Über ein reformatorisches Bildthema* (Hamburg: 2006); and Noble B., *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation* (Lanham: 2009).

⁶ No fewer than fifteen landscapes with the *Preaching of John the Baptist* are attributed to Herri met de Bles and his workshop. The two paintings studied here are the versions from the museums of Barcelona and Cleveland. Other versions are in Brussels, Vienna, Dortmund, Dresden, Prague, and in private collections. On Bles's *Preaching of John the Baptist*, see in particular, Serck L., *Henri Bles et la peinture de paysage dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux avant Bruegel* (Phd. Dissertation, Université Catholique de Louvain: 1990) 402–540; Gibson W.S., "Herri met de Bles, *Landscape with St. John Preaching*", *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 55 (1968) 78–87; Chong A., "Cleveland's Landscape with John the Baptist by Herri Bles: A Landscape with Figures or Figures in a Landscape?", in Muller N. – Rotsaco B. – Marrow J.H. (eds.), *Herri met de Bles: Studies and Explorations of the World Landscape Tradition* (Turnhout: 1998) 85–94; Kofuku A., "Herri met de Bles and Some Considerations on Simultaneous Representations in Early Flemish Painting", in ibidem 143–151; Toussaint J. (ed.), *Autour de Henri Bles* [exh. cat., Namur, Musée des arts anciens du namurois] (Namur: 2000) 170–175.

complex shape, which we can qualify as 'expanded typology', as I will demonstrate with two versions of this subject from the museums of Barcelona [Fig. 1] and Cleveland [Fig. 6].⁷

Stricto sensu, typology indicates the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. But typology was also extended to extrabiblical relationships: both prebiblical and postbiblical, and, in particular, in hagiographic and aulic literature on images. This practice gave rise at the end of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries to a literary genre mixing typology and analogy. The *Chronicles* of Jean Molinet and the "Couronne margaritique" of Jean Lemaire de Belge are entirely based on typological analogies between contemporary characters and their biblical prefigurations. The biblical protagonists are used as paradigms for understanding the events that punctuate the life of Maximilian of Austria or of Mary of Burgundy. The flowers, the stones, the animals, and the planets take part in this vast analogical network of terrestrial things described as the traces of a higher reality.⁸ Conversely, the invisible and incomprehensible reality of the divine can be seized partially through the terrestrial analogies. This mixed form of typology and analogy is also present in the theater of the *rederijkers* and, in particular, in Cornelis Everaert's moral plays. The analogical principle is often revealed by the title itself, as in the *Play of Saint Pieter Compared to the Dove* (*Tspel van Sinte Pieter ghecompareirt by de Duve*), or in the various plays comparing Mary to the light, a ship, and the throne of Solomon.⁹ Some plays consist of a dialogue between two characters with explicit names, such as *Inwendich Verstand* ('Interior Reason') and *Sriftinguerlicke Accoordanchye* ('Biblical Correspondance'). The protagonists of the *Play that was Performed for the Aragonese* (*Tspel dat ghespeilt was voor de Aragoenoyzen*) compare the

⁷ On the idea of expanded typology, developed in particular in literary studies, and on typology in early modern literature, see Lewalski B., *Milton's Brief Epic* (Providence: 1966); Lupton J.R., *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: 1996); Rendall T., "Visual Typology in the Abraham and Isaac Plays", *Modern Philology* 81 (1984) 221–232; Williams F., "Typology and the Audience of the English Cycle Plays", *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 8 (1975) 145–58; and Woolf R., "The Effect of Typology on the English Medieval Plays of Abraham and Isaac", *Speculum* 32 (1957) 805–825.

⁸ See Randall M., *Building Resemblance: Analogical Imagery in the Early French Renaissance* (Baltimore: 1996).

⁹ *Tspel van Maria gheleken by den Throon van Salomon*; *Tspel van Maria ghecompareirt by den Scepe*; and *Tspel van Maria ghecompareirt by de Claerheyt*, in Hüskens W.N.M. (ed.), *De spelen van Cornelis van Everart. Opnieuw uitgegeven, van inleidingen, annotaties en woordverklaringen vorziens*, 2 vols. (Hilversum: 2005) I 592–627, 645–674, 747–785. On Everaert, see Müller J.W. – Scharpé L., *Spelen van Cornelis Everaert* (Leiden: 1920).

relationship of Charles V and Francis I with the relationship between King David and Hanun, king of the Ammonites.¹⁰

This is the case in the *Play of the High Wind and the Soft Rain* (*Tspel van den Hooghen Wynt ende Zoeten Reyn*), written to celebrate the victory of Charles V over the troops of Francis I in Pavia in 1525.¹¹ The historic event is described and commented on by the protagonists, *Enich* ('One') and *Menich* ('Many'), and assisted by *Redelicke Verstannesse* ('Good Sense'). The dialogue consists of a series of analogical and typological comparisons between history, the Book of Nature, and the Book of Scriptures. According to a principle common to several plays of Everaert, the narrative progresses from the literal towards the spiritual, from material, even coarse analogies to more refined and spiritual ones. The first analogy appears in an inaugural dialogue where *Enich* and *Menich* compare the price of wine and the price of beer, lamenting that these commodities have become inaccessible because of the blockade and the incessant wars between the two monarchs. The historical event is then compared to a natural phenomenon that occurs in spring in Northern Italy: a shower of sweet rain that has the power to cast out the powerful winter winds and to fertilize the earth. The eagle of the emperor is compared to its biblical prefigurations: the eagles of Elijah, of John the Evangelist, and of Christ. The battle is then compared with the mythological story of Ulysses and Aeolus. Finally, the biblical analogy culminates in the revealing shape of a *tableau vivant* that shows the young David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul.¹² Good Sense claims then that the victory of Charles V is the most beneficial event for humanity since those biblical episodes, and even since the death of Christ. The multiple analogies that punctuate the play provide clear and striking images.¹³ They also aim at glorifying the emperor and at including his victory in a larger, divine plan. The multiple references to the Ottoman threat and to the domination of Charles V over the Turks

¹⁰ *Tspel dat ghespeilt was voor de Aragonoysen*, in Hüsken (ed.), *Spelen van Cornelis van Everart* 274–299.

¹¹ *Tspel van den Hooghen Wynt ende Zoeten Reyn*, in *ibidem* 219–249. On this play, see Mareel S., "Urban Literary Propaganda on the Battle of Pavia. Cornelis Everaert's 'Tspel van den Hooghen Wynt ende Zoeten Reyn'", *Queeste* 13, 2 (2006) 97–108; and *idem*, "Entre ciel et terre. Le théâtre sociopolitique de Cornelis Everaert", *European Medieval Drama* 12 (2008) 93–108.

¹² For this series of analogies, see Hüsken (ed.), *Spelen van Cornelis van Everart* 219–224.

¹³ On the *tooch* or *tableau vivant* in the plays of the *rederijkers*, see Moser N., "Maria verklaard. Everaert als exegeet in *Maria ghecompareirt byde claerheit* (1511)", in Dijk H. van – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Spel en spektakel. Middeleeuws toneel in de Lage Landen*, in (Amsterdam: 2001) 246–262, 369–377.

and over the entire world reformulate a widespread idea: that the reign of the emperor – born in the holy year of 1500 and pursuing a crusading policy of Christian expansion across the globe – inaugurated the millennium before the Last Judgment and fulfilled the prediction announced by the scriptures of ‘a single crook and a single shepherd’ (*Isaiah* 41:11; *Luke* 15:3–7).

These literary examples illustrate the porous nature of the border between typology and analogy in the Christian culture of the sixteenth century.¹⁴ In light of this, we can better specify the form of hybrid typology developed by Bles in his exegetical landscapes, involving extra scriptural figures. We can see that in a way that is specific to landscape painting, he articulates the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture. Before analyzing our two examples, it is worth recalling briefly the main exegetical data of this episode and, in particular, the central role of vision and typology.

The *Gospel of Mark* and especially the *Gospel of John* – both beginning with the story of John the Baptist¹⁵ – present the preaching of John as a fundamental event: the conversion of humanity that has turned away from God. The aim of John the Baptist's preaching is to achieve the prediction of *Isaiah*: ‘O those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned’ (*Isaiah* 9:1). This is why he is also the prophet who comes to shake from their torpor those who sit in darkness. He shouts to the crowd:

You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? [...] The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. (*Luke* 3:7–8; *Matthew* 3:7)

The gospels stress the importance of John as a ‘staple’ between the Old and the New Testaments, but the Bible and the exegetical tradition have insisted less on his typological relation with the prophets than on his resemblance to Jesus.¹⁶ Both of them were attacked by the Pharisees, and both John and Jesus were rejected by those who refused to believe.¹⁷ Jesus identified himself completely with John when he talked about Elijah, who

¹⁴ See Rad G. von, “Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament”, in Westermann C. (ed.), *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Atlanta: 1963) 17–39; and Margolin J.-C., “L’analogie dans la pensée d’Érasme”, *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 64 (1978) 24–50.

¹⁵ In the *Gospels of Mark* (*Mark* 1:1–11) and *John* (*John* 1:1–51).

¹⁶ The term ‘staple’ appears in Daniélou J., *Jean-Baptiste. Témoin de l’agneau* (Paris: 1964), *passim*.

¹⁷ On the typological relationship between John and Jesus, see Daniélou J., *Sacramentum Futuri. Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: 1950), *passim*; idem, *Jean-Baptiste. Témoin de l’agneau*, *passim*; and Goppelt L., *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (London: 1934; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: 1982), *passim*.

came forth and was rejected, evoking at the same time the suffering of the Son of Man.¹⁸ The resemblance between John and Jesus culminates in the sentence: 'After me will come one more powerful than I [...] I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy spirit' (*Mark* 1:7–8).

The variety of the crowd attracted by the Baptist, including soldiers, prostitutes, tax collectors, and priests, has been traditionally interpreted as a prefiguration for the universal crowd attracted by Christ and also as a prefiguration for the Church community. The success of John the Baptist and the imminence of his proclamations worried the religious authorities of Judaism, which at the time was split into different parties. They sent two delegations: a group of priests and Levites and a group of Pharisees and Sadducees, the most conservative and strict defenders of the observance of the Law, who, as Erasmus emphasizes, came to ask insolent questions and thus exemplify the refusal to see.¹⁹

More than the Synoptic Gospels, the *Gospel of John* stresses the typological relationship between Jesus and John, closely articulated by the visual logic underlying the text. The antithesis between light and darkness described in the first line is the fundamental polarization of a constellation of themes linked together by a complex set of correspondences and oppositions. The first lines connect the original separation of darkness and light (*Genesis* 1) to the preaching of John the Baptist, who urges the people to come out of the darkness of death and sin and enter into the light of Christ. John is first described as the universal witness of the light and linked to the prophets, and then he is presented as the historical witness of the light of Christ. He shows Jesus to the crowd and exhorts them to baptism, which erases original sin and opens the eyes of blinded humanity. While the synoptic gospels speak of John as forerunner, the *Gospel of John* strongly emphasizes his threshold position. As a first step, before the episode of the Baptism, John the Baptist is the prophet of 'the one who comes'. He prophesies the imminent *Parousia*, and through baptism, he announces the advent of Christ to the community of those preparing for the Messiah. In a second step, he shows that the *Parousia* has now arrived, and identifies Jesus as the one on whom the Holy Spirit came down at the Jordan River. This double aspect, this transition from last prophet to first witness, is what designates John as the one who belongs to both the world before and the world after the *Parousia*. The relationship between Christ

¹⁸ *Mark* 11:30; *Mathew* 11:18, 21–32; *Matthew* 3:2, 4:17.

¹⁹ Erasmus, *Paraphrase on John*, trans. Philipps, 21–29.

and his precursor describes a movement of reversal. Jesus is revealed by John, who in turn will disappear himself: 'He must increase, but I must decrease' (*John* 3:30). According to the typological rule juxtaposing the shadow with its fulfillment, the appearance of the one and the revelation of the other mean that the second is the *forma perfectior* of the first. For John, states Erasmus, was not 'the light promised by the prophet, [he] was only the herald of the true light, not the light itself'.²⁰

The exegetical tradition has emphasized the visual economy that organizes the story of John the Baptist in the *Gospel of John*, largely published, translated, and commented upon during the sixteenth century.²¹ The *Paraphrase* of Erasmus, published in 1526, is the culmination of a long series of commentaries on the "Gospel of Light",²² which begins with the *Annotations on the New Testament* of Lorenzo Valla (published in 1504 by Erasmus in Leuven) and continues with the commentaries on the Johannine Gospel by Charles de Bovelles (1511) and Jean Lefèvre d'Étaple (1522). In the preface of his *Paraphrase on John*, Erasmus defines the singular power of the Johannine Gospel, its art of suggestion and heightened sublimity of style that corresponds to its elevated subject-matter: 'John has a style of his own; he strings his words together as though they were links in a chain, held together sometimes by a balance of contraries, sometimes by linking the like to the like, sometimes by repeating the same thing several times'.²³

This definition applies to the fundamental dualism of the visible and the invisible and prepares for the development and amplification of the theme of vision that characterizes both Erasmus's *Paraphrase on John* and also the exegeses by Origen, Cyril, or Bovelles that had an immediate influence on him.²⁴ Like Bovelles, Erasmus builds a series of analogies

²⁰ Ibidem 19.

²¹ See Mann M., *Érasme et les débuts de la Réforme française* (Paris: 1934); Erasmus, *Paraphrase on John*, annot. – trans. J.E. Phillips, *Collected Works of Erasmus* 46 (Toronto: 1991) xi–xvi; Farmer G.S., *The Gospel of John in the Sixteenth Century: The Johannine Exegesis of Wolfgang Musculus* (New York – Oxford: 1997).

²² In addition to the comments by Valla, Bovelles, or his friend Lefevre d'Etaples, Erasmus – who, in the dedicatory letter of his *Paraphrase on John*, draws attention to the superabundance of commentary on the Johannine Gospel, dating from Antiquity – was largely responsive, not without a critical eye, to the *Homilies on John* of John Christostom, the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* of Cyril of Alexandria, the *Treatise on the Gospel of John* of St. Augustine, and the *Paraphrase on the Gospel of John* by John Theophylact. On these sources, see Erasmus, *Paraphrase on John*, trans. Philipps, xi–xvi.

²³ Ibidem 3.

²⁴ Ibidem xi–xvi.

and repetitions, the recurrence of which serves to permeate the reader's mind. Unlike the scholastic reasoning of his predecessor, who organized his argument into *propositiones*, *responsiones*, and *conclusiones*,²⁵ Erasmus submits the motif of light to a virtuosic series of variations, according to the standards of rhetorical *copia*, by using analogies, repetition, and associations, in which each sentence seems to repeat the previous one while amplifying upon it in a *crescendo*-like movement:

And so great was the gloom of this world that neither human philosophy nor the religion of the Mosaic law nor the firebrands of the prophets could dispel it. At last our eternal sun came, to whose unconquerable light every gloom gives way. And he came to restore life to all people, not just to the Jews, but to all the nations of the world, and once the gloom of sins had been wiped away, to give eyes to all to acknowledge through the light of Faith God the Father, who alone is to be worshipped and loved, and his only Son, Jesus Christ. Our corporeal sun does not shine on everyone, for it has its regular alternations; but this light goes on shining by its own natural power even in the thickest darkness of the world, offering itself to all that may live again and see the path of eternal salvation, which is open to everyone through the gospel faith. And though the world, blinded by the filth of sin and the gloom of base lust, is unwilling to look at this light, nonetheless it has proved impossible for the light to be stained by any darkness of this world, no matter how deep. For he alone was pure from every stain of sin, and he was nothing other than light everywhere pure and undiminished. For the darkness of this world fights constantly against the light, which the world hates as the revealer of its works, and it quenches or dims the rays of many, but against this living and eternal light it has not prevailed. Tumult have been raised by Jews, by philosophers and men of power, by those who have completely surrendered themselves to transitory things, but this light wins out; it still shines in the midst of the world's darkness, and it will always shine, sharing itself with anyone who only shows himself capable of enlightenment. But what is to be done with those who knowingly and willingly repulse light, who when they are summoned to the light deliberately shut their eyes so as not to see it? Certainly nothing was left undone by him, so that no one would be without this light. For he did not thrust himself suddenly before mortal eyes; lest he make them even more unseeing because of their unbelief.²⁶

This excerpt makes clear the way that Erasmus, insisting on a visual thematic, organizes his paraphrase on two major points: the antithesis of light and darkness (described as an eternal struggle of humanity divided

²⁵ Charles de Bovelles, *Commentarius in primordiale evangelium divi Ioannis* (Paris, Josse Bade: 1511).

²⁶ Erasmus, *Paraphrase on John*, trans. Philipps, 18–19.

into those who receive the light and those who refuse) and the denunciation of Pharisaism (announced by the metaphors of the fog, the night, and the dream), which is synonymous with willful blindness. The emphasis on these two visual themes is itself linked to the second dominant feature of this paraphrase: the typological relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus, supported by a series of metaphors (the light and the sun, baptism by water and the baptism of light).

In light of the foregoing, the question that now arises is whether, and how, Bles's landscapes visualize the emphasis on darkness opposed to light and on the typological relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. Like the vast majority of Bles's variations on the *Sermon of John*, the version from Barcelona is based on a compositional scheme consisting of a diagonal axis along which are placed a high mountain, a shady forest, a large, rocky foreground, and a city or a harbor on the distant horizon [Fig. 1]. The composition contrasts the dark forest with the very light horizon in a way that could echo the Johannine antithesis between darkness and light. The wide foreground encompasses a large crowd, and Bles stresses the attitudes of skepticism, heated debate, and strong discussion, with which the audience reacts to John's sermon. Some of them are discussing and others pointedly turning away from the Baptist because of the violence of his tyrade and the announcement of the presence of the Messiah. Unlike the versions painted by Jan Swart, or later by Pieter Bruegel, Bles's multiple versions of the *Sermon of John* focus less on the diversity of the crowd and more on the ceremonial costumes of Ottoman inspiration, as well as on the crowd's skeptical minatory reactions, emphasized in particular by the scimitars, which have a strong visual presence at the forefront [Fig. 2]. These pictorial features – the arrogance, the sumptuous clothing, and the covert discussions – must be related to another specific aspect of Bles's paintings of the *Sermon of John*: namely, the reduction of the figure of Christ to a tiny and inconspicuous silhouette [Fig. 3]. This visualizes an idea that Erasmus insistently underscored in his exegesis on the episode:

He is now standing in this crowd of people, and he dwells in your midst as one among the people [...] he is not advertising himself by any parade of those things by which the devotees of the world value a person. He has not yet revealed his power and greatness, but in reality he is far other than he seems.²⁷

²⁷ Ibidem 21.



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 10] Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist* (ca. 1540–1550). Oil on wood, 53 × 102 cm. Barcelona, Museo Nacional de Arte Catalan, inv. n° 50470.



Fig. 2. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the audience. Barcelona, Museo Nacional de Arte Catalan, inv. n° 50470.



Fig. 3. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of Christ and roots. Barcelona, Museo Nacional de Arte Catalan, inv. n° 50470.

The difficulty in perceiving the tiny, almost hidden silhouette of Jesus is also a test for the beholder, echoing Erasmus's words. But it is not only the contrast between the exuberant crowd and the almost invisible Christ that visualises the antithesis between light and darkness and the pharisaism stressed by the exegetical tradition. Bles's landscapes are characterized by a repertoire of recurring motifs actively involved in the visual exegesis, by way of their interactions with each other and with the biblical protagonists. One example is the dead tree and the green tree, an antithetical motif also present in Gassel's *Allegory of the Law and the Gospel*. It appears in several of Bles's landscapes, in particular in his various versions of the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, where the dead tree is associated with the negative figures of the priest and the Levite (embodying excessive attachment to the letter), while the green tree is directly associated with the Good Samaritan (thus reinforcing the Christian allegory of the parable). In the *Preaching of John*, the base of the dead tree, surrounded by the audience, contains a dark cavity housing John [Fig. 1]. Its counterpoint is the green tree associated with Christ, who has just appeared in the clearing [Fig. 3]. The opposition of the two trees clearly highlights the typological relationship between John and Jesus. Another of Bles's recurring motifs that acts in relation to the two trees is the owl hidden in the

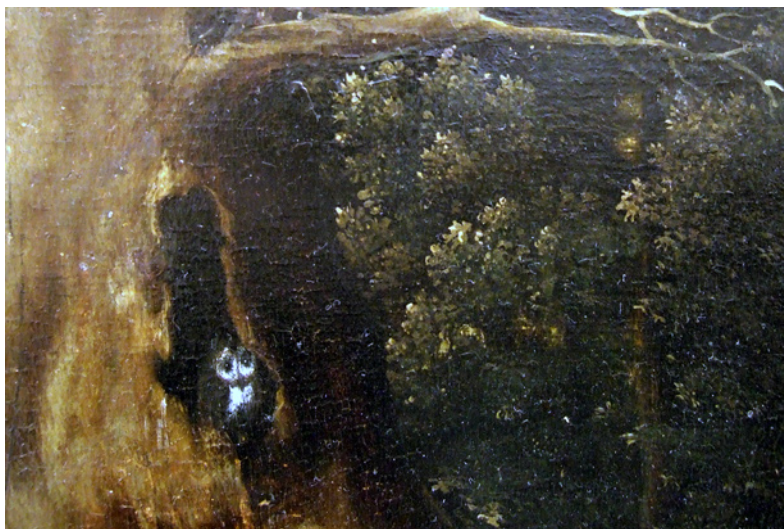


Fig. 4. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the owl. Barcelona, Museo Nacional de Arte Catalan, inv. n° 50470.

trunk of the dead tree, the figurative signature of the painter [Fig. 4]. Its location and size help to suggest a relationship of analogy with the saint nestled in a second opening at the base of the tree. The visual analogy refers to a thematic analogy between the bird, whose nocturnal vision is associated with discernment, and the prophet, who calls upon his auditors to see Christ. The visual antithesis is completed and amplified by the polarity between the visionary protagonist and another of Bles's recurrent figures – the blind man and his guide [Fig. 5]. The presence of this character in a dozen of Bles's landscapes, including five versions of the *Sermon of John*,²⁸ corresponds to a precise pattern that contrasts the blind man with the biblical protagonist who embodies spiritual vision. The *Sermon of John* echoes some of the contemporary plays that moralize upon the story of John the Baptist. In many plays, the blind man who recovers his sight – both in the real sense of a miraculous healing and in the metaphorical sense of a spiritual conversion – is opposed to the seers who remain spiritually blind.²⁹ Physical and spiritual blindness, pharisaism,

²⁸ These five versions are preserved in Vienna, Barcelona, Dresden, and Brussels.

²⁹ Hellerstedt mentions about forty examples in sixteenth-century Netherlandish painting and literature, where the blind man and his guide are mainly negative characters. The couple appearing in five of Bles's version of the *Preaching of John the Baptist*, finds its counterpart in contemporary moralizing plays that narrate the story of John the Baptist.



Fig. 5. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the blind man and his guide. Barcelona, Museo Nacional de Arte Catalan, inv. n° 50470.

and the light of Christ, which opens the eyes of the blind, are the constant themes in those texts relating the blind man and his guide to the biblical story of John the Baptist.³⁰ In an earlier anonymous play, the blind man and his guide play the roles of the disciples whom John sends to Jesus. The disciples witness Jesus miraculously heal the blind and then return to announce to John, trapped in the darkness of his dungeon, that 'the blind see'.³¹ In *The Predestined Blind Man* by Jacopz Adrien (performed in Brielle in 1552), and also related to the biblical story of John the Baptist, the blind man is contrasted with his guide, in this case a *leijtswiff* ('female guide'), who advocates the Old Law against the Gospel, as defended by the blind man. The paradox, or the irony, is that the *leijtswiff*, although a seer, is metaphorically blind because of her inability to see the truth of the Christian religion, while the blind man, because of his faith in Christ, recovers his sight.³²

In one of them, the blind man who is finally healed by Jesus, along with his guide, substitute for the disciples of John the Baptist who were invited to follow Jesus. On this motif, see Hellerstedt K.-J., "The Blind Man and his Guide in Netherlandish Painting", *Simiolus* 13 (1983) 163–181.

³⁰ See, for instance, Coornhert, *De Blinde van Jericho* (1582), and de Lauris Jansz, *De geboren Blinde* (1579).

³¹ In Lauris Jansz *De geboren blind* (1579), the miraculous healing of the blind man, who opposes the skeptical Pharisees, is followed by his conversion to the faith and his reception of spiritual light.

³² Hellerstedt, "The Blind Man and his Guide" 163 ff.

A last and unique aspect of this painting worth mentioning is the circle of stumps close to the tiny silhouette of Jesus [Fig. 3]. It echoes the circular arrangement of the audience around John the Baptist at the foot of a gigantic, dead tree. A square pile of dried wood indicates that these roots are the remnants of trees, but the circle of stumps also surrounds a young green tree. This circular motif is related to the tiny figure of Christ. The proximity of the small silhouette of Jesus to this unusual motif is not accidental. The circle surrounding the green tree creates an analogy with the circle of skeptical Pharisees surrounding the figure of John the Baptist at the foot of the enormous, dying tree. We must relate this to John's violent tirade against the Pharisees and to the image he formulates of sterile roots thrown into the fire. Unlike Lieven de Witte's woodcut in the *Dat leven ons Heeren*, which illustrates the story literally by showing a small woodcutter, Bles's painting brings into conjunction two sets of allusions to the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture made up of details and polarities that require the spectator's close attention to a network of motifs that call for interpretation. The importance of Bles's exegetical landscapes in aligning the reading of Scripture and the reading of Nature is based not so much in the individual significance of their respective elements, but rather in their association with the biblical protagonists, with whom they are seen to correspond by means of juxtapositions, accumulations, oppositions, and analogies.

In his version from the Cleveland museum [Fig. 6], Bles locates the biblical story not in the usual, mountainous landscape but in a maritime setting animated by a ship-filled harbour. This change of setting implicates the Christian symbolism of water in the visual exegesis. Water plays an important role in textual and visual typology. It is precisely a typological passage in *Gospel of John*, which provides the metaphor of Christ as the living water: 'Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them". By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive' (*John* 7:37–39).³³

³³ The *Typologische tafeleren uit het leven van Jezus* developed this idea by connecting eight biblical scenes around the theme of water: as metaphor of the divine word, of the purifying and invigorating spirit, and of its forceful and expansive movement. The images depict Moses striking the rock and the Last Supper, the lepers cleansed in the Jordan and the baptism of Christ, the paradisiacal fountain of life and Jesus among the doctors. On this manuscript, see Cardon B. – Lievens R. – Smeyers M. (edss), *Typologische tafeleren uit het leven van Jezus: A Manuscript from the Gold Scrolls Group (Bruges, ca. 1440) in the*



Fig. 6. [COL. PL. 11] Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist* (ca. 1540–1550). Oil on wood, 29.8 × 41.9 cm. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

The spring gushing from the rock [Fig. 7] – a metaphor for the living water of Christ – is often present in Bles's landscapes and is associated with characters who embody the evangelical light, such as the Christ at Emmaus, Saint Jerome in penitence, or John the Baptist. Placed in the center and foreground of the painting, the spring interacts with other figures and elements – the preacher, the scene of the baptism, the water mill, and the Pharisees, who pointedly turn their backs [Fig. 7]. But it also interacts with the two curled-up figures arranged symmetrically on the left and right of the landscape and linked by a relationship of formal analogy [Figs. 9–10]. The blind man and his guide and the two trees (which usually accentuate the topic of pharisaism and the biblical opposition between the shade and the light) are absent from this version. But their framing and structural function (as is characteristic in almost all Bles's landscapes) is assumed here by these two figures linked to the Christian symbolism of water. The character in the right foreground diverges from the normative iconography. His isolation and enigmatic attitude draw our attention.

Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Ms. Morgan 649: *An Edition of the Text, a Reproduction of the Manuscript, and a Study of the Miniatures* (Leuven: 1985).



Fig. 7. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of John the Baptist and audience. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

The authors who have studied this painting have identified him as a kind of Narcissus, or a negative figure who shows his disinterest in the biblical event by moving away from the audience [Fig. 10].³⁴ But if we consider the framing structure that usually underlies Bles's landscapes, together with

³⁴ See Gibson W.S., "Herri met de Bles, Landscape with St. John Preaching", *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 55 (1968) 78–87; Falkenburg R.L., "Marginal Motifs in Early Flemish Landscape Paintings", in Muller N. – Rotsaco B. – Marrow J.H. (eds.), *Herri met de Bles: Studies and Explorations of the World Landscape Tradition* (Turnhout: 1998) 85–94.

the biblical theme of water, it seems possible to interpret this incongruous figure, plunging his head into the water, as the positive pole of an opposition involving the biblical themes of torpor and living water. His opposite is the astonishing sleeping figure at the feet of John preaching [Fig. 9]. Erasmus had developed the theme of sleep or torpor on several occasions, in particular in connection with a passage from Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*: 'It is high time now to awake out of sleep; for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand; let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light' (*Romans* 13:12). Erasmus then refers to a series of allusions to sleep and waking in the Bible, and he insists on another text where the apostle characterizes sleep as a life lived in sin. Like Paul, he accentuates the opposition between sleep and awakening by recourse to the antithesis between darkness and light. And, still in his *Paraphrase of Romans*, he amplifies this opposition by reference to the antithesis between the Old and the New Law: 'Our salvation is nearer than at the time when we trusted in the Mosaic Law and thought that it was very near. The night of our former life has advanced far; that day is upon us which will uncover even the most hidden things'.³⁵

The way Erasmus, in several of his exegetical texts, directly links together torpor, darkness, and attachment to the Old Law, on the one hand, and, on the other, awakening, baptism, and the light of the Gospels, finds a visual echo in Bles's landscape. The painter borrowed the figure of the sleeping listener from an engraving of Jan Swart [Fig. 8]. But he does not simply copy it. He reinterprets this character by giving him greater visual importance and relating him – through a visual analogy – to his counter-figure on the right. By doing so, he invites us to interpret the man literally falling asleep as a metaphor for the sleep of mankind and the scenes of the preaching and baptism as representations of humanity's spiritual awakening, made possible by the living water of Christ. The antithetical pairing of torpor and awakening replaces the normal binary of blindness and insight that structures all other versions of Bles's *Sermon of John the Baptist*. A similar example is to be found in the foreground of the *Sermon of John* from Vienna, where a figure shakes a listener who has fallen asleep on the rock whence spouts the flow of water.

Another detail that becomes actively involved in the visual exegesis by way of an expanded, post-biblical typology is the tiny but significant detail

³⁵ Erasmus D., *Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians*, trans. – annot. J.B. Payne – A. Rabil Jr. – W.S. Smith Jr., *Collected Works of Erasmus* 42 (Toronto: 1984) 76–77.



Fig. 8. Jan Swart van Groenningen, *The Preaching of John the Baptist* (ca. 1520–1530). Woodcut, 13.3 × 11.3 cm. London, British Museum.

of a boat decorated with the double-headed eagle of the emperor, position near the scene of the baptism of Christ [Fig. 11].³⁶ Below the eagle appears the emblem of Charles V, with the two columns of Hercules spanned by

³⁶ The recent re-emergence on the art market, of an important painting attributed to Herri met de Bles's studio, representing the *Siege of Thérouanne, with the Army Led by Charles V Camping before the Town* (oil on panel, 118.1 × 181 cm.), likewise incorporate this detail. On this panel, see *Galerie De Jonkheere. Tableaux de maîtres anciens*, catalogue (Paris: 2010), no. 9.



Fig. 9. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the sleeping figure. Cleveland, Museum of Art.



Fig. 10. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the figure at lower right. Cleveland, Museum of Art.



Fig. 11. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the Baptism of Christ and ship with the Habsburg double-headed eagle. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

a ribbon bearing his motto, 'Ne plus ultra'. A calculated symmetry connects the eagle and the dove of the Holy Spirit represented on both sides of the boat. In fact, the typological relation between the emperor and Christ was fundamental to the construction of the imperial image of Charles V. These comparisons were so numerous that in 1559, Wilhelm van Schouwenburg Snouckaert, the librarian of the emperor, published in Antwerp a panegyric systematically listing all the analogies glorifying the emperor: he was compared with ancient sovereigns, with the heroes of mythology (especially Hercules), and with characters from the Bible. He was called the new Moses, the new Solomon, and the new David.³⁷ This typological practice must be related to the hopes nourished during this

³⁷ See Yates F., "Charles V and the Idea of Empire", in *Astraea* (London: 1975); Checa Cremades F., "La symbolique impériale à travers les arts plastiques", in Soly H. (ed.), *Charles-Quint, 1500–1558. L'empereur et son temps* (Antwerp: 1999) 477–501; Burke P., "L'image de Charles Quint: construction et interprétations", in *ibidem* 393–476.

historical period for the establishment of a 'universal empire'.³⁸ The play of Everaert quoted earlier is only one of the many texts that evoke the hoped-for 'revival of the world' under the reign of Charles. This hope was occasioned by collateral historical circumstances: the longing for a revival of the Church, the desire to free Christendom of heresy, the prospect of ceaseless wars, the struggle against the dual threat of the Turks and the the Protestant reformers, both from within and from without the Holy Roman Empire.³⁹ But it was also prompted by the discovery, colonization, and evangelization of the New World. One did not hesitate to interpret these historical facts as a sign of the imminence of the millennium and to describe Charles V as 'the chief' of the 'fifth monarchy of Jesus Christ', intended to fulfill the prophecy of the book of Revelation by reigning over the whole Earth.

The port city of this seascape, with its fleet of ships docking and setting sail at the horizon, is supposed to be Machaerus, the city of Herod, near the Dead Sea, where John the Baptist was beheaded. The tiny scene of the beheading is visible in the middle of the town [Fig. 12], but the naval activity and modern ships also evoke the painter's city of Antwerp, then the capital of trade with the New World [Fig. 13]. Again, there is an emphasis on Ottoman costumes, and we should note in passing the small but significant detail of the scimitar, which extends under the mantle. It signals the anger that will lead to the arrest and beheading of John the Baptist. The scimitar certainly refers to the biblical story and to the danger that threatens John the Baptist, but in the eyes of the painter's contemporaries, it was also a symbol of cruelty and of the Ottoman threat.

The association in Bles's landscape of the arms of Charles V and the dove of the Baptism could have completed the list of Snouckaert van Schouwenburg. Typology, in an expanded sense, fulfills here its exegetical function as a process of analogy connecting biblical events with events of the present time, and also as a method for interpreting the prophetic or allegorical significance of historical events. The prophets, including Elijah who foreshadows John the Baptist, were the instruments of the first covenant with God's chosen people. The prophets, of whom John the Baptist is the last representative, were also the harbingers of a new and perfect

³⁸ Ariosto in the 1532 edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, repeats the supposed prophecy of Augustus in the *Aeneid*, construing it as a reference to Charles V who was born to reinstate the Golden Age. On this passage, see *ibidem* 418.

³⁹ On the topic of Charles V as emperor of the whole earth and the universal shepherd, see Checa Cremades, "La symbolique impériale"; and Burke, "L'image de Charles Quint".



Fig. 12. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the Beheading of John the Baptist. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

alliance extended to all the nations of the world and opened to 'those which had sat in darkness'.⁴⁰ The privilege of the chosen people of God in the Old Testament was to be the precursors for a more perfect nation whose fulfillment is the Kingdom of God extended to the utmost limits of the world. The preaching of John the Baptist and the baptism of Christ are the inaugural events of this new age, one stage in the movement of the history of salvation, which will undergo its completion in the Heavenly Jerusalem. The pictorial juxtaposition of the imperial eagle and the dove of baptism suggests that between this biblical event and its eschatological fulfillment, the divinely ordained reign of the Emperor is the crucial step.

The typological principle of the Old Testament as prefiguring the New, which itself contains the announcement of the last days, expresses the cohesion and homogeneity of the divine plan that extends to comprise

⁴⁰ John the Baptist is a major step in the progress of the history of Salvation. His preaching prepares for the expansion of nations, and his baptism announces the *Parousia*, on which see Daniélou J., *Jean-Baptiste. Témoin de l'agneau* (Paris: 1964).



Fig. 13. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the fortress of Machaerous and the right foreground. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

the future and even the end of history. Beyond the method of allegorical interpretation of the Old Law, the typological thought to be found in religious, aulic, and political texts and images, far from dealing solely in intellectual speculation, reveals the implicit desire to establish a biblical parallel that legitimates, makes sacred, and confers prestige on the actions of a concrete individual or an institution.

As a young assistant, Herri met de Bles painted his first sermon of John the Baptist as the background of a vast landscape with the baptism of Christ, executed in collaboration with Pieter Coeck van Aelst. This was the beginning of an obsession with this biblical episode, since the two paintings from Barcelona and Cleveland belong to a large series of fifteen versions attributed to Bles and his workshop. This situates Bles at the forefront of the important iconographic shift that took place during the first half of the sixteenth century, when the episode of the sermon of John the Baptist gradually replaced the traditional representation of the baptism of Christ in triptych format with images of John the Baptist in the wings. The full visibility of the incarnate Christ in front of historical witnesses and donors in a state of meditative vision was being superseded by dense landscapes that hide the figure of the divine amid a crowd that embodies blindness. This evolution towards a painting requiring less meditative and devotional participation from the beholder and more hermeneutic or exegetical engagement, must instead be related to theological issues, such as the Erasmian denunciation of false appearances and superstitious practices opposed to the internal nature of faith. Bles's visual typology, defined less in a strict sense than as a hybrid form combining typology and analogy, must also be related to trends developing in early modern literature. It corresponds to a form of knowledge that involves the ability to grasp analogies and interpret visual rhymes, suggestive and sometimes enigmatic figures and motives intended to captivate the attention and stimulate the mind. In the specific case of Bles's exegetical landscapes, analogies connect not only the two parts of the Bible (the Old and New Testaments), but also, and even more fundamentally, the two Books of Scripture and Nature. The textual tradition of exegesis had established and clarified various correspondences, but the painters proposed innovative visual interpretations made up of rhythms and formal echoes that aimed at stimulating our attention and provoking the dynamics of interpretation.

Bles used the owl as his figurative signature because it symbolized both what is hidden and what is revealed. Its presence from part of his sustained effort to endow the appearances of literal history with a profoundly spiritual meaning, based on digressive and enigmatic details and on analogical and typological relationships. In the *Sermon of John* from Barcelona, the owl's



Fig. 14. Herri met de Bles, *The Preaching of John the Baptist*, detail of the owl. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

ostentatious and oversized presence implies a relation of analogy with the visionary protagonist [Fig. 4]. In the version from Brussels, the tiny owl attacked by birds (which in Christian bestiaries symbolizes heretics or Jews hostile to the light of Christ) offers a marginal gloss on the central scene. In the Cleveland painting, the proximity of the emblematic signature to the enigmatic figure embodying wakefulness, as opposed to the torpor, is undoubtedly not simply fortuitous [Fig. 14]. In his *Ratio*, Erasmus states that the scriptures contain numerous enigmas and obscurities whose aim is to arouse human beings from their torpor and prompt them to make the effort to learn.⁴¹ In his *Commentary on Psalm 4*, he writes that God allowed countless variants of the biblical text to develop in order 'to challenge us and awaken us from our torpor'.⁴² Both remarks may apply to Bles's pictorial variations dotted with enigmatic analogies.

⁴¹ Erasmus, D., *Ratio verae Theologiae*, in *Erasmus, Ausgewählte Werke*, eds. – trans. H. Holborn – A. Holbron (Munich: 1933) 259.

⁴² Erasmus, D., *Expositions of the Psalms*, eds. – trans. M.J. Heath – D. Baker-Smith, *Collected Works of Erasmus* 63 (Toronto: 1998) xlvi.

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EARLY MODERN HANDS:
GESTURE IN THE WORK OF JAN VAN HEMESSEN

Todd M. Richardson

To say that the status of gesture in the work of Jan van Hemessen is a privileged one would be an understatement. From the first extant painting by the artist, who was active primarily in Antwerp from ca. 1520 to 1556, it is clear that hands and hand gestures are important components of his visual language.¹ In his *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* [Fig. 1] from 1525, a crowd of active characters, eager to observe how the confrontation between Christ and the Pharisees will unfold, are stacked across a shallow space and within an architectural interior. The Pharisees had brought an adulteress into the temple where Jesus was teaching and asked him what should be done with her.² It was a trap in order to incriminate him. The wall of male figures serves as a backdrop to Christ in the foreground, who responds to the question by bending down to write on the ground, and to the adulteress who stands at the right of the picture with her hands bound. Looking at the woman and the two men who embrace her, we see a constellation of hands and arms whose construction requires effort to identify which hands belong to which person. This is especially the case for the group of three hands at the woman's waist, which first attracts the viewer's attention and, second, directs it downward. The adulteress crosses her hands in front, while the man on the left reaches with his right arm and crosses over both of her hands. The gesture of the man's hand on the right mirrors the gesture of the woman's left hand. Between these two, the woman's right hand extends and points toward the ground. The similar gestures and dark clothing make it difficult to know which hand belongs to whom. This trio is a thoughtful artistic device that inspires prolonged and analytical viewing, eventually functioning to guide the viewer's gaze downward towards Christ's action. But it is also through this close visual analysis that the viewer may also realize that the gestural composition interacts with the painting's content – for a story begun with sexual sin,

¹ For a general overview of Hemessen's work, see Wallen B., *Jan van Hemessen: An Antwerp Painter between Reform and Counter-Reform* (Ann Arbor: 1983).

² *John* 7:53–8:11.



Fig. 1. Jan van Hemessen, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* (1525). Oil on panel. Location unknown. Reproduced in Wallen B., *Jan van Hemessen: An Antwerp Painter between Reform and Counter-Reform* (Ann Arbor, MI: 1983).

followed by an attempted trap, Hemessen's intertwined hands slyly cause the viewer to idle over the woman's pelvic area; and her dangling right index finger, situated in the middle of her hips, mimics the shape of the male member, which got her into trouble in the first place. This is a sexual innuendo typical in the artist's work.

Though there are many other paintings by Hemessen like it, in this inaugural work alone we see the painter's use of gesture on multiple levels: compositional or descriptive, rhetorical and symbolic. As Rudolph Wittkower explains, 'Descriptive gestures, like pointing, compositionally elucidate a story or narrative and are therefore needed when painting or sculpture have to deal with a literary theme. Rhetorical gestures, such as animated facial expressions, an extended arm, or hand against the chest, offer a heightened sense of drama and reflect and illuminate emotional conditions.' Wittkower continues, 'Symbolic gestures belong mainly to pre-Renaissance art; from the late fifteenth century onward they are, as a rule, confined to such attitudes as blessing'.³ Wittkower labels this kind of gesture as symbolic because, in contrast to rhetorical ones, viewers must know a code in order to understand the meaning of the gesture.

As we will see from a close visual analysis of Hemessen's *Christ Bearing the Cross* (1553) [Fig. 2], the artist consistently employs active hands to animate the painted space, which function both for descriptive purposes – to guide the gaze – and rhetorical – to showcase psychological states and enhance dramatic effect. This observation, however, is nothing new. As Burr Wallen notes in his seminal study of Hemessen's work, the artist – one of the foremost Romanist painters of his generation, active between Quentin Massys and Pieter Bruegel – employs daring projections, caricatural exaggeration, and expressive gesture to explore the psychology of the passions with deliberate fervor. While his studies of physiognomy no doubt benefitted from the work of Leonardo, he drew deeply felt inspiration from the depictions of pathos by fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century

³ Wittkower R., *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (New York: 1977) 148. The literature on gesture during the Renaissance is extensive. For a general overview, see Bremmer J. – Roodenburg H. (eds.), *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Oxford: 1991). More specifically for the early modern period, see Barasch M., *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge: 1987); Baxandall M., *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350–1450* (Oxford: 1971); McNeill D. (ed.), *Language and Gesture* (Cambridge: 2000). A comparison with oratorical gesture was fundamental to the development of Renaissance artistic theory. See Boyle M.O., "Deaf Signs, Renaissance Texts," in Marino J. – Schlitt M. (eds.), *Perspectives on Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History* (Rochester: 2000) 168; Boyle M.O., *Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo to Calvin* (Leiden: 1998).



Fig. 2. [COL. PL. 12] Jan van Hemessen, *Christ Bearing the Cross* (1553). Oil on panel. Esztergom, Hungary, Diocesan Museum.

Netherlandish forebears such as Rogier van der Weyden, Dirk Bouts, and Massys. His 'mannerist eccentricities', Wallen continues, 'can be observed in his intertwined limbs and prolific expanses of rumpled drapery'.⁴

For example, a quick comparison between Hemessen's *Mocking of Christ* from 1544 [Fig. 3] and Massys's depiction of the same subject painted in 1520 [Fig. 4] – particularly the overall compositions, lack of depth, placement of the figures close to the picture plane, and the Leonardo-derived faces – reveals the importance of Massys's work for Hemessen. However, it is clear that Hemessen's use of gesture for dramatic effect reaches new heights with this picture. The Pharisee at the top left twirls his mustache with intrigue and all six hands of the men in the bottom half of the picture are prominently displayed, either extended in the air toward Christ or employed to contort lips and cheeks to form a derogatory facial expression. Even the children located at the painting's bottom edge, who function almost as *putti* anti-types, display busy hands. Rather than expressions of wonder and devotion, as in the two well-known *putti* at the bottom of



Fig. 3. Jan van Hemessen, *Mocking of Christ* (1544).
Oil on panel. Munich, Alte Pinakothek.

⁴ Wallen, *Jan van Hemessen* 5–6.

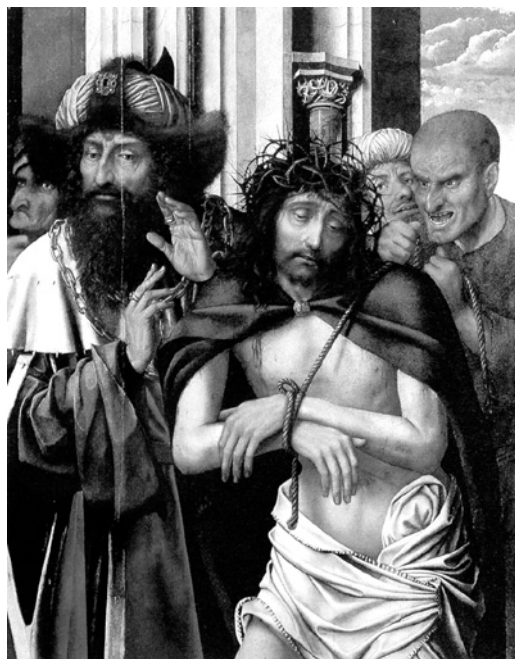


Fig. 4. Quentin Massys, *Mocking of Christ* (1520).
Oil on panel. Venice, Palazzo Ducale.

Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, derision and mockery characterize the actions of Hemessen's children. Most notable, the right hand of the child on the left forms the famous 'fig' gesture, which was, and still is, a well-known obscene gesture in the Netherlands that symbolizes the sex act.

Contrary to Wittkower's ideas about the non-symbolic nature of gesture from the late fifteenth century onward, I will argue that Hemessen's hands are not only symbolic in many cases – even playing on earlier traditions of gesture for paradoxical effect – but also extend beyond these somewhat static categories of communication. Gestures function as a kind of visual language that pictorially represents, or rather re-presents, the biblical story, dynamically engaging the performative nature of the act of viewing to expand interpretive possibilities. More than just another static, one-to-one communicative code, in which a symbol refers directly to individual meanings codified by texts, taken together interactively gestures engage the process of visual analysis, which itself informs the painted narrative unfolding in the moment. The re-presentation of a biblical story – that is, the artist's visualization of his own unique perspective on the story –

combined with the integral role of the viewer in engineering another layer of meaning during the act of viewing, connects this essay to the complex theme of visual exegesis, a topic I will return to shortly.⁵ In order to set the stage for better understanding Hemessen's unique portrayal of *Christ Bearing the Cross*, I will first briefly discuss another example of the significant role and function of hands in the artist's oeuvre.

Two of Hemessen's most popular subjects are the penitent St. Jerome, painted no fewer than ten times, and the calling of St. Matthew, represented four times. In his 1540 version of Matthew's calling, now in Vienna [Fig. 5], Hemessen constructs a highly complex composition incorporating foreground, background, and marginal motifs that are woven together via the mediation of fluttering hands that help to guide the gaze, visually characterize internal states, symbolically connect to the content of the picture, and engage the viewer as an active participant in the drama that unfolds. As illustrated by Matthew's attire in the bottom left and the money chest at the bottom right, the Gospels describe Matthew as a publican, or tax collector, who most likely collected taxes from the Hebrew people for Herod Antipas, a practice that led to Matthew's considerable wealth and comfort. 'One day, as he sat at his tax booth, Jesus appeared to him and said, "Follow me". Matthew immediately obeyed, got up, and left everything. Afterward he held a banquet for Jesus at his house, which drew a large crowd of tax collectors to eat and fellowship with him. This, of course, attracted criticism from the Pharisees and teachers of the law, so much so they openly complained to Jesus and his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard this, he responded, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means [. . .]. For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners"'.⁶

In the painting, Matthew and Christ are situated in opposite diagonal corners. Matthew gazes sternly upward from the bottom left to consider Christ's beckoning, his right hand defiantly affixed to his hip, an elderly couple hovering over him. Christ returns Matthew's gaze and calls his new disciple from the upper right with his right arm extended across his chest. Between the two, a young, alluring female assistant dressed in red raises her arms in an attempt to prevent further interaction. Christ's

⁵ For a definition, in-depth discussion, and literature on 'visual exegesis', see the Introduction to this volume.

⁶ *Matthew* 9:9–13.



Fig. 5. [COL. PL. 13] Jan van Hemessen, *Calling of St. Matthew* (ca. 1539–40). Oil on panel. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

hand gesture takes the standard form of blessing and motions to a space beyond where the characters congregate to indicate that his approval is in support of Matthew's sacrificial decision yet to come, rather than the current moment of crisis and indecision. In that background space, Hemessen provides a marginal motif that references the ultimate sacrifice prophesied by Christ just two verses after the story of Matthew's calling [Fig. 6]. Christ's gesture of blessing rests precisely on a doorframe that opens up into a kitchen where a man roasts meat pierced by spits over an open fire, alluding to Christ's role as the sacrificial lamb. *Matthew* 9:15 reads, 'And Jesus said to them, "The wedding-guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them"'. Such a unique composition immediately brings to mind a so-called *Still-Life* painting from 1552 by Pieter Aertsen [Fig. 7], an exact contemporary of Hemessen, in which the artist inverts, as Aertsen was known to do, this pictorial relationship: it is a butchered lamb that is now in the foreground resting its leg on a doorframe that opens up to Christ in the house of Martha and Mary in the background. The 'gesture' of the leg of lamb on the doorframe mimics



Fig. 6. Detail of Jan van Hemessen, *Calling of St. Matthew*.



Fig. 7. Pieter Aertsen, *Still Life* (1552). Oil on panel. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Christ's raised gesture of blessing as he lays his other hand approvingly on the devout Mary. In Hemessen's painting, Christ's anointing gesture of the background scene both references his own coming sacrifice and offers it as an example of self-denial for Matthew to follow in his current predicament.

The young female dressed in red in the middle foreground both turns to look back toward the space of the viewer and extends her arms forward in an attempt to separate Matthew from Christ. Her denial of Christ is as strong as her invitation to the viewer to take part in the tense moment of truth. While her raised arms both attract the gaze of the viewer and obstruct the space between Christ and Matthew, the gesture also calls to mind another female biblical character who had multiple surprise encounters with heavenly figures. As Michael Baxandall describes it, a reaction of disquiet or fright defines many fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century depictions of the Annunciation, in which Mary responds to the angel Gabriel with raised arms.⁷ The most extreme example, of course, is Sandro Botticelli's *Annunciation* (1489); however, there are plenty of examples from Netherlandish art, such as Jan van Eyck's *Annunciation* and the right panel of Rogier van der Weyden's *Miraflores Triptych*

⁷ Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: 1988) 55.



Fig. 8. Rogier van der Weyden, *Miraflores Triptych* (1440). Oil on panel. Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Detail of right wing.

[Fig. 8], in which Christ appears to Mary after his resurrection. Interestingly, in Hemessen's painting, the woman's open arms of discomfort, which attempt to obstruct Matthew's view of Christ, mirror the open arms of reconciliation performed by a second representation of Christ in the background [Fig. 9].

The background detail represents the banquet held at Matthew's palatial home, which drew not only a crowd of the convert's tax-collecting counterparts, but also plenty of criticism from the Pharisees, to which Jesus replied that he had come to save not the righteous but sinners. We see Jesus, flanked by his disciples, performing with one hand a gesture of protection toward the tax collectors on his left and with his other hand a gesture of admonishment toward the Pharisees on his right. By connecting the similar, yet antithetical gesticulations of the young woman and



Fig. 9. Detail of Jan van Hemessen, *Calling of St. Matthew*.

Christ—one of obstruction and discord, the other of revelation and concord—and allowing the background scene to inform our understanding of Matthew's calling in the foreground, it becomes clear that Hemessen is dividing the characters into those who 'see' Christ as the Messiah and those who do not. There are those who are religious, yet blind to the truth, and those who are sinners, yet recognize God incarnate.⁸ And it is the visual

⁸ The practice of juxtaposing foreground and background antithetical motifs has been well documented in the works of Hemessen's immediate predecessors, such as Massys and Joachim Patinir, and exact contemporaries, such as Aertsen and Herri met de Bles, artists in whose work the play on seeing and understanding, physical blindness and spiritual vision, was a constant theme. The theme's popularity during the time was due in no small part to the literature of the *Devotio Moderna* and the writer/theologian Erasmus of Rotterdam, for whom the outer and inner man, physical eye versus the eye of the mind, plays a major role in his ecclesiastical and theological writing. See, for example, Falkenburg R.L., "Doorzien als esthetische ervaring bij Pieter Bruegel I en het vroeg-zestiende-eeuwse landschap", in H. Devisscher (ed.), *De uitvinding van het landschap. Van Patinir tot Rubens, 1520–1650* (Antwerp: 2005) 53–65; and idem, "Marginal Motifs in Early Flemish Landscape Paintings", in Muller N.E. – Rosasco B.J. – Marrow J.H. (eds.), *Herri met de Bles: Studies and Explorations of the World Landscape Tradition* (Turnhout: 1998) 153–169. See also Weiler A., *Desiderius Erasmus. De spiritualiteit van een christen-humanist* (Nijmegen: 1997); and Zsuzsa U., "Over de geestelijke praktijk van de Moderne Devotie", in Bange P. et al. (eds.), *De Doorwerking van de Moderne Devotie* (Hilversum: 1988) 29–45.

prominence of dramatic hand gestures that not only express emotions and construct the composition, but also engage the viewer in close visual analysis to cultivate meaning within the narrative unfolding. The background opposition between those who deny Christ and those who embrace him helps to inform the interaction between Christ and Matthew unfolding in the foreground. Matthew's strong jaw line, stiff lips, resistant hand firmly placed on his hip, as if about to grab the knife handle strapped to his belt, and the fact that he gives no indication of 'immediately' rising from the table as conveyed in the Gospel story indicate that this is the moment just before his decision, when the woman's divisive efforts might successfully prevent him from seeing and following Christ. The spiritual narrative unfolds, then, from bottom left, where Matthew hears Christ's call, to the center, where fear and resistance dominate, and, finally, to the top right background illustration of personal self-sacrifice.

Although the notion that gestures have the capacity to form a comprehensive system of communication was not explicitly formulated until the early seventeenth century, in both Italy and the North ideas about visual communication in the form of gesture and body language were attracting greater interest by the early sixteenth century.⁹ This was the case not only with the vocabulary of the language of gesture, exemplified by a number of attempts to compile a historical dictionary, but also with its 'grammar', in the sense of the rules for correct expression. While neither comprehensive nor applicable across geographic regions, there were individual attempts to systematically document hand gestures and codify sign languages developed for ecclesiastical ritual, preaching manuals, judicial courts, the deaf, use in monasteries during extended periods of silence, and mystery or rhetorician plays.¹⁰

The renewed humanist interest in antique culture had a significant impact on Hemessen, one of the foremost Romanists of his time, as evidenced in his many paintings that quote both antique Roman sculpture and architecture. Gesture was a fundamental aspect of oration in antiquity, which might have drawn Hemessen's interest. In Cicero's *De Oratore*

⁹ For a comprehensive overview, see Bragg L., "Visual-Kinetic Communication in Europe Before 1600: A Survey of Sign Lexicons and Finger Alphabets Prior to the Rise of Deaf Education", *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 17, 4 (2012) 1–25.

¹⁰ See Nitschke A., "Sign Language and Gestures in Medieval Europe: Monasteries, Courts of Justice, and Society," in Segestråle U. – Molnár P. (eds.), *Nonverbal Communication: Where Nature Meets Culture* (Mahwah, NJ: 1997) 263–74. Bulwer John, *Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the Hand whereunto is added Chironomia, or the Art of Manual Rhetoric* (London, T. Harper: 1644; reprint ed., New York: 1975).

and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, the use of gesture is described as one of the most important elements of convincing rhetoric. Quintilian's rather well-known text on gesture is worth quoting at length. In Book XI, Chapter 3, he writes:

As for the hands, without which all action would be crippled and enfeebled, it is scarcely possible to describe the variety of their motions, since they are almost as expressive as words. For other portions of the body may help the speaker, whereas the hands may almost be said to speak. Do we not use them to demand, promise, summon, dismiss, threaten, supplicate, express aversion or fear, question or deny? Do we not employ them to indicate joy, sorrow, hesitation, confession, penitence, measure, quantity, number and time? Have they not power to excite and prohibit, to express approval, wonder or shame? Do they not take the place of adverbs and pronouns when we point at places and things? In fact, though the peoples and nations of the earth speak a multitude of tongues, they share in common the universal language of the hands.¹¹

Similar to Hemessen's *Christ and the Adulteress* discussed earlier, a painting that pictorially reformulates the contentious moment of a biblical story, in the *Calling of St. Matthew* gestures not only function rhetorically – that is, as reflections of emotional conditions – but are also indicators of deep, even multi-tiered symbolic meaning. Furthermore, and most importantly for better understanding the theme of visual exegesis, by virtue of gestures' spatial relationship to one another and the viewer's active participation in connecting foreground, background, and marginal signs, gestures function to engage the viewer in an interactive 'bringing forth', as Hans-Georg Gadamer would phrase it, of the new, unique interpretation of the biblical story's subject in a particular painting.¹² Through the play of gesture, the viewer is brought into the event with its own subjectivity and unfolding narrative. In the image, the viewer acknowledges not the biblical text in the abstract, but the artist's reading of it. The visual mechanisms of the painting, and their subsequent effect, reveal the unique perspective the artist wants the viewer to experience.

Recognizing the communicative power of hands for Hemessen, I now turn to one of his later paintings, *Christ Bearing the Cross*, currently in Esztergom, Hungary. A half-length portrayal of Christ bearing a stout wooden cross, the top of which is cut off by the upper edge of the painting, takes

¹¹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratio* (Cambridge: 1980). See also Hall J., "Cicero and Quintilian on the Oratorical Use of Hand Gestures", *The Classical Quarterly* 54, 1 (2004) 143–160.

¹² See O'Kane M., "Wirkungsgeschichte and Visual Exegesis: The Contribution of Hans-Georg Gadamer", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33 (2010) 147.



Fig. 10. Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1490). Oil on panel. Ghent, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

up almost the entire pictorial surface. Dressed in a brown robe, crowned with thorns, bleeding from his forehead, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, Christ balances the cross on his right shoulder while he walks to the left and meekly gazes out at the viewer, as if we, too, accompany him on his route to Golgotha. Closing in on both sides are a collection of grotesque faces that caricature the soldiers and tormenters so eager to witness his death. Making sure the pace does not slow, a man immediately to the right sticks out his tongue and grasps tightly a rope tied around Christ's neck. The soldiers' weapons, particularly the spears emerging in the background, foreshadow the violence to come, as one pierces the cross and another the right hand of Christ, just as nails will do moments later. Dark clouds in the distance further dramatize the ominous moment. The dramatic effect of the grotesque faces, with their large, bulging eyes packed tightly together on the right, and the presentation of Christ in a shallow space pressed against the picture plane bring to mind both Hieronymus Bosch's depiction of the same subject from ca. 1515 [Fig. 10] and Massys's *Ecce Homo* from 1520 [Fig. 4].

For such a contentious moment, however, and with such a heavy burden to bear, what does not make sense in the painting is the delicate way

Christ's hands are placed lightly on the cross. His upper hand, for example, almost caresses the wood; just the fingertips fall softly on the surface. The lower hand is no different – rather than a tight grip around the base, as one would expect, the fingers curve to land on the front side, not even grasping the corner of the beam. Notice the bottom pinky finger and the cast of light and shadows underneath all the fingers, which indicate that they do not rest firmly on the cross. The arch of both wrists and the cambered form of the fingers, coupled with Christ's calm demeanor, actually make it seem as if he is playing an instrument rather than carrying a tool for torture. This is especially the case if we compare Christ's hands to those that tightly grasp objects on either side of him. Just to the left of Christ's lower hand, a soldier provides an example of the type of grip we might expect of Christ, his hands firmly wrapped around a spear. Likewise, on the right side, the left hand of the man sticking out his tongue is prominently raised as it tensely grasps Christ's leash. Similarly, in other Hemessen paintings representing Christ at various Stations of the Cross, Christ himself tautly wraps his fingers around the objects he holds. In a *Man of Sorrows* from 1540 [Fig. 11], Christ's strong, pierced left hand assertively holds the vertical beam of the cross, and in the *Mocking of Christ* [Fig. 3] his knuckles turn white from tightly gripping a staff.

On the one hand, the almost weightless cross and the ease with which it is handled could simply be a maneuver by Hemessen to depict a calm, triumphant Christ, who, though beaten, surrounded by enemies, and headed toward certain death, has reconciled himself to his fate, a submission that results in death defeated. However, in addition to this possibility, given the integral role of hands in Hemessen's visual language, I would like to push this observation a step further by considering more seriously that Christ might be depicted playing an instrument and, if so, to what end the artist would have composed such an unusual version of the popular devotional subject. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss music and musical instruments in the sixteenth-century Netherlands, particularly their interaction with visual culture and religious ritual during the time.¹³ However, in answering the first question, it doesn't take long to narrow down the options: one possibility is the viola da gamba. While

¹³ For a general overview, see Clouzot M., *Images de musiciens (1350–1500): typologie, figurations et pratiques sociales* (Turnhout: 2007); Dekiert M., *Musikanten in der Malerei der niederländischen Caravaggio-Nachfolge: Vorstufen, Ikonographie und Bedeutungsgehalt der Musikszene in der niederländischen Bildkunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: 2003); Winternitz E., *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art: Studies in Musical Iconology* (New Haven: 1979).



Fig. 11. Jan van Hemessen, *Man of Sorrows* (1540). Oil on panel. Linz, Landesmuseum.



Fig. 12. Jan van Eyck (circle of), detail of *The Fountain of Life*. Oil on panel. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

the finger composition and their placement would be similar, violas were primarily played with a bow, as can be seen in a central panel of the open *Isenheim Altarpiece* by Matthias Grünewald.

The more likely possibility is the harp, due not only to visual similarities with Hemessen's Christ and his cross but also to its prevalence in scripture and in works of art for centuries. While there are hundreds of examples of harp playing in medieval and early modern art, I have selected one that is generally representative, from *The Fountain of Life* from the circle of Jan van Eyck [Figs. 12 and 13].¹⁴ The angels are seated in a garden and provide musical accompaniment for the heavenly celebration. Like Hemessen's Christ with the cross, an angel balances the wooden base of a harp against her right shoulder and raises both hands to pluck the strings. The wrists of Christ and the angel are also similarly arched and the fingers are curved with extended thumbs.

Taking this inquiry a step further, we might ask what devotional purpose would be served by the elegant placement of Christ's hands on the

¹⁴ See, for example, Van Schaik M.J.H., *The Harp in the Middle Ages: The Symbolism of a Musical Instrument* (Amsterdam: 1992).



Fig. 13. Detail of Jan van Hemessen, *Christ Bearing the Cross*.

cross calling to mind the playing of a harp, and further, how the viewer's understanding of the biblical subject would be impacted by the recognition of this subtle reference. The plot thickens, or at least begins to make some sense, when Hemessen's figure is compared to the most famous harp player in the Bible, King David. Throughout the late Middle Ages, the music of the harp was considered above all to be spiritual music and accorded power to overcome evil and to heal the mind, the source of which was 1 *Samuel* 16, when David played the harp to calm Saul and cast out evil spirits. An illustration from the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* [Fig. 14] represents the dangerous consequences of David's powers for his relationship with Saul – the sword of the disturbed Saul is pointed directly toward David, a reference to 1 *Samuel* 19 when Saul, filled with envy, tries to kill David while he plays the harp.¹⁵

However, the harp is not merely an attribute of David. An important figurative use, drawing on *Psalms* 22 and 57, directly connects the harp

¹⁵ Ibidem. See also Zingel H.J., *König Davids Harfe in der abendländischen Kunst* (Cologne: 1968).

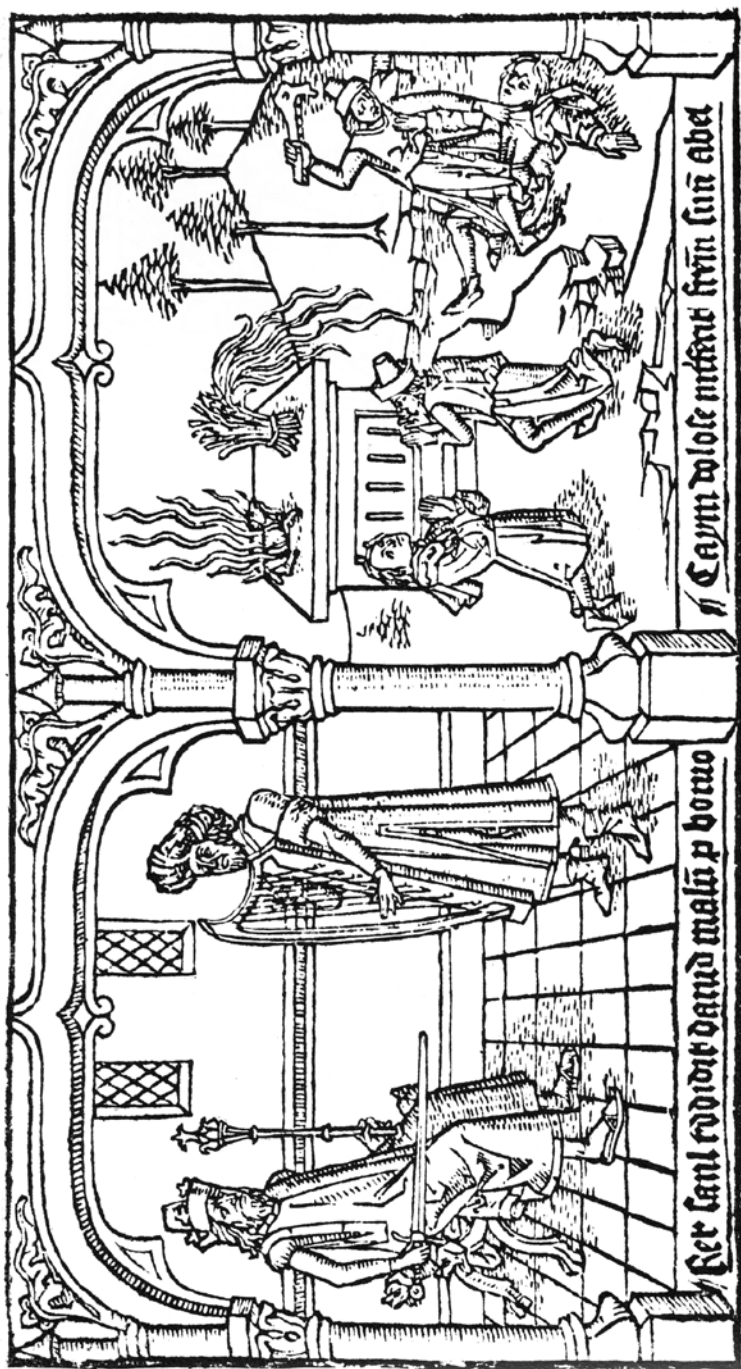


Fig. 14. *King Saul Rendered to David Evil for Good* (15th century). Woodcut miniature. As reprinted in Wilson A. – Wilson J.L. (eds), *A Medieval Mirror* (Berkeley: 1984).



Fig. 15. Jean Pucelle (School of), *King David Playing the Harp* (14th century). Franciscan Missal, fol. 170^v. Ink on parchment. Paris. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

with Christ's crucifixion. For example, on two pages from a fifteenth-century Dutch book of hours, an image of Christ carrying the cross on the left is juxtaposed with a representation of David playing the harp on the top right corner. Similarly, in a fourteenth-century Franciscan Missal, an image from the school of Jean Pucelle represents King David with his harp, accompanied by monks singing, in the midst of a vision of the future crucifixion [Fig. 15].

The association of harp and crucifixion should be viewed within the broader context of the first seven verses of *Psalm 57*, which were understood in medieval and early modern liturgical settings as the prayer of Christ as he awaits deliverance from the cross: appealing to God's mercy, he expresses confidence that he will be set free. Verse 8 was understood to mark a change of speakers, with the Father now addressing the Son: 'Awake, my glory; awake, psalter and harp', whereas the two instruments referenced Christ's divine and human natures. As a text used for the Easter liturgy, this psalm celebrated the escape of Christ from the bonds of



Fig. 16. *Bible moralisée*, part I. Folio 136^r (Paris, 1225–1235). Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

death.¹⁶ In biblical commentary on the Psalms, from the sixth-century literary scholar Cassiodorus to Bernard of Clairvaux and John Wycliff, the harp is continually connected to the passion of Christ; as Cassiodorus writes in his *Exhortations on the Psalms*, ‘the harp means the glorious Passion which with stretched sinews and counted bones sounded forth his bitter suffering as in a spiritual song’.¹⁷ Augustine, in his commentary on *Psalm 57* (which he also repeats throughout his *Exhortations*), goes so far as to say, ‘Here in this Psalm and everywhere in the Psalms where there is reference to the harp, we are to understand Christ as man in his suffering’.¹⁸

A page from the *Bible Moralisée* echoes this association and typological prefiguration, and makes the connection of the harp with Christ and his crucifixion even more specific [Fig. 16]. In the top left roundel, a cluster of men are on the left side, Saul sits on the right, while David sits in the middle with his fingers strumming a harp. The marginal commentary states that when Saul was out of his senses and the devil entered him, the

¹⁶ Pickering F.P., *Literature & Art in the Middle Ages* (Coral Gables: 1970) 292.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

sons of Israel led David before the king to play his harp. As we can see from the little creature on Saul's shoulder, David was successful in exorcising the demon and Saul raises his hand in thanksgiving. This scene is located directly above a second roundel that portrays Christ crucified. The commentary explains the connection: 'That David removed the devil from Saul's body through the sweetness of his harp and relieved his pain signifies Jesus Christ who through the sweetness of his Crucifixion removed the devil from the bodies of the Jews and relieved their pain'.¹⁹

Elsewhere in the typological imagery of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, a representation of Christ being hammered to the cross is compared to Jubal, the 'father of all such as handle the harp and organ'.²⁰ As Reindert Falkenburg has pointed out, artists illustrating chapter 25 of the *Speculum* drew a similar parallel, but in this case the parallel is between images of King David plucking a harp and Christ hanging on the cross – the strings of the instrument are to be seen as a metaphor for the stretched sinews of Jesus. This concept remained relevant into the early sixteenth century, Falkenburg argues – so much so that Bosch could ironically play with the idea in the hell panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, where a man is crucified on a harp [Fig. 17].²¹ Although much earlier, a page from a twelfth-century German Psalter [Fig. 18] illustrates just how conflated the harp and crucifixion had become: almost abstract in nature, the drawing represents David himself as a harp, while at the same time his vertical figure and the horizontal beam of the instrument combine to prefigure the crucifixion. A late Middle High German poem from about 1300 offers commentary on *Psalms* 57 and draws a similarly intense parallel between harp and crucifixion:

Now hear how beyond doubt this music (-making) is to be compared to our Lord. The harp and the psaltery are mute when still unspanned and, unless struck, silent like the linden leaf that falls from the tree. If anyone tightens their strings, however, and strikes them again and again, their sweetness will be heard. Thus exactly did our Lord Christ. Yes, immediately the glorious Saviour was nailed and fastened on the Cross, spanned and direly stretched, struck again and again, the sweet music of God which he makes for his faithful was heard. The sweet song of the harp at once sounded down to Hell.²²

¹⁹ *Bible moralisée*, part I, fol. 136r; Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS. Bodl. 270b).

²⁰ *Genesis* 4:21.

²¹ Falkenburg R., *The Land of Unlikeness: Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights* (Zwolle: 2011) 245–247. See also Holsinger B.W., *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture. Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: 2001).

²² Quoted in Pickering, *Literature & Art* 295.



Fig. 17. Hieronymus Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights* (ca. 1498). Oil on panel. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado. Detail of right wing.



Fig. 18. *David's Psalter as Type of the Crucifixion*, Psalter illustration (South-east Germany, 12th century). Reproduced in Pickering F.P., *Literature & Art in the Middle Ages* (Coral Gables: 1970).



Fig. 19. Hans Leonard Schäufolein, woodblock print in Henry Suso's *Das Buch Genannt Seuse* (Otmar edition, 1512).

Finally, Henry Suso's popular *Das Buch Genannt Seuse*, first published in 1482, is a kind of biography of the mystic's many spiritual experiences and offers additional contemporary spiritual context for Hemessen's painting.²³ An illustration from the 1512 Otmar edition by Hans Leonard Schäufolein [Fig. 19] depicts a friar sitting before the persecuted Christ just prior to his crucifixion, indicated by the column next to him.²⁴ The accompanying text represents a vision taken from Chapter 13 of Suso's *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*, which is dedicated to the nobility of earthly suffering.²⁵ Dialogue takes place between two characters, The Servant and Eternal Wisdom. The Servant describes excruciating suffering and oppression, and doubts if he can bear it all. Eternal Wisdom responds, 'Whatever is noble and good must be earned through hardship [. . .]. Suffering is a short affliction but a long joy'. Pleasure, happiness, wealth, and knowledge, Eternal

²³ See Seuse Heinrich, *Deutsche Schriften*, ed. K. Bihlmeyer (Stuttgart: 1907 and 1966).

²⁴ On the work of Schäufolein, see Buchner E., "Der junge Schäufolein als Maler und Zeichner", in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: 1927) 46–76.

²⁵ McGinn B., *Henry Suso: The Exemplar, with Two German Sermons* (New York: 1989) 245–249. See also Rozenski S., "The Visual, the Textual, and the Auditory in Henry Suso's *Vita or Life of the Servant*", *Mystics Quarterly* 34, 1–2 (2008) 35–72.

Wisdom explains, are nothing compared to knowing how to surrender and abandon yourself to God in all suffering. The Servant then reacts with deep relief: 'O sweet, loving Lord, this is like the music of sweet strings to a suffering person. Lord, if only you would play such songs for me in my suffering'. Eternal Wisdom: 'Now listen to music from the taut strings of a person suffering for God and see how rich it sounds and how sweet the tunes are [...]. It transforms an earthly man into a heavenly man'.²⁶

In Suso's subsequent commentary on the vision, he explains that at the request of The Servant and Eternal Wisdom, a young man appeared before them with a psaltery and readied it for play (as can be seen in the illustration). He goes on to describe the good that comes from contemplating God's suffering and provides his readers with the proper perspective from which to meditate on Christ's Passion, which is a constant tethering of suffering to eternal joy.²⁷ According to Bernard McGinn, the *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* was the most widely distributed and frequently read German manual of devotion during the 150 years following its first publication and was translated into multiple languages.²⁸

With this devotional context in mind, I now return to Hemessen's painting. If harp and crucifixion were connected in the mind of contemporary viewers, I suggest that viewers understood such a unique visual interpretation of the biblical subject as fulfillment in a devotional context, similar to Suso's tethering of suffering to eternal joy. For example, in his *Exhortations on the Psalms*, after discussing David's lamentation in *Psalms* 22, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' which was understood to prophesy Jesus's similar cry of anguish while hanging on the cross, Cassiodorus goes on to discuss the harp as 'singing in the resurrection'.²⁹ And in *Luke* 24:44, Christ's final teaching to the Apostles before his ascension, he explains, 'all things must be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets and the Psalms concerning me'. Hemessen's unique representation of Christ bearing the cross folds the Old Testament typological prefiguration of David playing the harp into his depiction of a New Testament event via a visual reference to the cross as harp. Christ's arched hands and delicately curved fingers act as prompts to the viewer to consider the painting on more than one level. In the *Calling of St. Matthew*, there is a process of enlightenment, from hearing and rebelling

²⁶ McGinn, *Henry Suso* 247.

²⁷ *Ibidem* 249.

²⁸ *Ibidem* 36.

²⁹ Pickering, *Literature & Art* 293.

to personal self-sacrifice, which facilitates devotional exercise. In *Christ Bearing the Cross*, this process comes full circle: from initial empathy, sorrow, and repentance inspired by Christ's intense suffering at the hands of the marauding figures surrounding him, to subsequent hope and comfort in the grand plan of God that leads to resurrection and new life. In the end, Christ and his cross are filled with, and the fulfillment of, David and his harp – an imaginative typological transformation from earthly suffering to heavenly joy performed within the mind of the viewer through close visual analysis. Taking this observation to its ultimate conclusion, if Christ bearing his cross is an example for the Christian viewer to follow, a foundational theological tenet made popular by Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, the production of divine musical harmonies in the midst of earthly persecution and pain is offered as a behavior for the viewer to reenact. Erasmus of Rotterdam discusses just such an idea in a lengthy letter to Pope Adrian VI in 1522, which also includes the extraordinary metaphor of Jesus on the cross representing a harp:

This is the special duty of bishops and priests; and yet every individual might learn to play for himself. The spirit will help him as he plucks the strings and will breathe secret power into his inmost parts, if only he provides a pure and fervent heart – the ears, that is, with which a mind that has been purified can listen. Oh that your Holiness might be our new David – that consummate master of this kind of music! – *who not only played himself but taught many other singers to do the same*. And David was a prototype of Jesus Christ, our psalmist, who, when his body was strung like a harp upon the cross, played nothing common, nothing earthly, but such a melodious music as the Father loves, the moving force of which we feel. What harmony of the divine love sounded in that chord: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'³⁰ (emphasis mine)

Far from a straightforward representation of a biblical event, Hemessen offers his unique interpretation of a popular devotional subject, calling on the theological knowledge and storehouse of images in the viewer's mind in order to construct an experience in which the performance of viewing itself becomes a spiritual exercise. Christ's hands act as prompts toward a shift in perspective, from persecution to praise, from death to life. The painting not only represents a spiritually enlightened Christ who makes music out of suffering, but it also trains viewers to do the same.

³⁰ Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, ed. J. Clericus (Leiden, 1703–6) V 717F; quoted in Miller C.A., "Erasmus on Music", *The Musical Quarterly* (July 1966) 347ff.

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BECOMING ELIJAH: *THE SLEEP OF ELIJAH* BY PHILIPPE DE
CHAMPAIGNE FROM THE CONVENT OF THE VAL-DE-GRÂCE

Tatiana Senkevitch

'Don't you feel compassion for good Elijah who sleeps in the shadow of juniper tree in the way more reminiscent of a dead man than a sleeping one?' asked Louis Richeome in his treatise on the figures of the Holy Eucharist regarding the moment of Elijah's sleep described in the Book of Kings.¹ Exhausted by the flight from the threats of Queen Jezebel and dispirited by his defeats, Elijah daringly asked God to send him death. He was granted sleep, instead, and an angel who delivered him food and news about his future actions. In *The Sleep of Elijah* painted by Philippe de Champaigne, along with other devotional paintings for the convent of Val-de-Grâce, the luminous, graceful, and calm face of the prophet captivates the viewer's attention by the solidity and beauty of his sleep more than with thoughts of death [Fig. 1].² The angel in the painting also casts a protective gaze on Elijah, even if his gentle touch is meant to awaken the prophet. The gravely ill Anne of Austria, the commissioner of this painting, desired to meet her death in Val-de-Grâce, a convent that she patronized for many years. Instead, she had to obey the command of the king, who insisted on seeing his mother's last days in the Louvre in accordance with her status as the queen mother. Should Anne of Austria have remained in the convent, according to her wish, she might have cast one more compassionate gaze on the sleeping Elijah before her own repose.

After the death of Anne of Austria on 20 January 1666, all major churches in Paris and across the kingdom held services in her memory. In one such

¹ 'Avez-vous pas compassion du bon Élie qui dort à l'ombre de ce genevre, plus semblable à un mort qu'à un homme dormant?' Richeome Louis, *Tableaux sacrez des figures mystiques du tres-auguste sacrifice et sacrement de l'Eucharistie* (Paris, Sonnius: 1601) 299.

² On this painting see Dorival B., *Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674). La vie, l'œuvre et le catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1976) II 14; Foucart-Walter E., *Le Mans, musée de Tessé: peinture françaises du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 1982) no. 18; Bonfait O. – MacGregor N., *Le Dieu caché: les peintres du Grand siècle et la vision de Dieu* [exh. cat., Académie de France] (Rome: 2000) 97–99; Pericolo L., *Philippe de Champaigne: 'Philippe, home sage et vertueux'. Essai sur l'art et l'œuvre de Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674)* (Tournai: 2002) 282–284; Tapié A. – Sainte Fare Garnot N., *Philippe de Champaigne: Entre Dévotion and Politique* (Paris: 2007) 237–238.



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 14] Philippe de Champaigne, *The Sleep of Elijah*, c. 1656. Oil on canvas, 1,850 × 2,500 mm. Le Mans, musée de Tessé. Photo credit: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

service, Jacques Biroat, a Cluniac theologian and a councilor to the court, capitalized on the theme of fertility, a subject that pained Anne over the twenty years of her childless marriage to Louis XIII.³ It was Anne's fertile faith and her prayers, Father Biroat pointed out, that helped her to overcome the barrenness. Anne's prayers became as fruitful as those of the prophet Elijah with which he was able to open the door to the treasures of Heaven.⁴

³ Biroat Jacques, *Oraison funèbre d'Anne d'Austriche, reyne de France et mère du Roy prononcée dans la Sainte Chapelle de Paris* (Paris, Edme Couterot: 1666) 8.

⁴ Ibidem 9: '[...] que ses larmes furent les rosées qui firent naistre ce lys, & que oraison fut comme celle du Prophet Élie, la clef du Ciel qui en ouvrit enfin les thresors, pour en faire sortir le bonheur & abundance. *Oratio iusti clauis coeli* [Chrysost. Sermon. I Élie...]' (original orthography).

A parallel between a female ruler and an Old-Testament prophet was a common trope neither for Anne's gender nor for the rhetorical conventions of the period. This striking simile between one's physical fertility and the fertility of prayers pronounced by a contemporary theologian points to the significance of the prophet Elijah in Anne of Austria's private devotional life. It also stands as an index of the prophet Elijah's importance in the Counter-reformation politics actively supported by Anne of Austria, a queen of France who was born a Spanish Infanta. Along with many aristocratic female supporters of the monastic revival, Anne venerated the prophet Elijah as the founder of the Carmelite Order. Elijah also occupied a distinct place in the theology of the Eucharist, the defense of which was situated at the core of Counter-reformation politics. Anne's prominent role in the perpetuation of the Counter-reformation's programs, such as the defense of the Holy Eucharist, remains a less acknowledged part of her reign.

A simile between the queen's gift for prayers and the ardent faith of a prophet drawn in Biroat's funeral oration undergirds my examination of *The Sleep of Elijah* by Philippe de Champaigne. His powerful representation of the story of Elijah's sleep from 1 Kings 19 suggested a certain 'exegesis of human existence,' to borrow Paul Ricoeur's phrase, emerging at the intersection of Anne's private life and her public image as the defender of the Eucharist. As Ricoeur pointed out, such a mode of figuration of one's private life into a biblical character is predicated on the hermeneutic tradition launched by Saint Paul, who

invites the hearer of the word to decipher the movement of his own existence in the light of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. Hence, the death of the old man and the birth of the new creature are understood under the sign of the Cross and Paschal victory. But their hermeneutic relation has a double meaning. Death and resurrection receive a new interpretation through the detour of this exegesis of human existence. The "hermeneutic circle" is already there, between the meaning of Christ and the meaning of existence which mutually decipher each other.⁵

Why and how would the figure of Elijah and a Habsburg princess, later the queen of France, make a similar 'hermeneutic circle'? How could this circle be explained by Philippe de Champaigne's interpretation of the Biblical text? This essay attempts to determine the possible intersection and 'the mutually deciphering' instances between the scriptural meaning of

⁵ Ricoeur P., *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. L.S. Mudge (Philadelphia: 1980) 54.

this episode from the *Book of Kings* and the devotional and artistic practice of its two main *meditants* – the artist and the queen – in the context of the meditative treatises from the period, with consideration of the centrality of the cult of the Holy Sacrament in the exchanges of exegetical signs between religious individuals and institutions in post-Reformation France.

Philippe de Champaigne rendered the story of an angel's appearance to Elijah overtaken by sleep under a juniper tree with no ambiguity as to the precise moment in the Scriptures he selected to depict.⁶ The circumstances under which the painting was commissioned, as well as its location in the monastery for which it was intended, are not known, as this painting is not mentioned specifically in the extant contracts for the decorative programs of Val-de-Grâce.⁷ The prominence of the theme of spiritual and physical nourishment made *The Sleep of Elijah* a plausible companion to four other paintings seized from the refectory of the monastery in the late eighteenth century.⁸ Despite the difference in the narrative modes between the painting in question, in which a passive and fully interiorized state of the prophet anticipates a long journey, and other paintings depicting aspects of communal meal consumption, *The Sleep of Elijah* could

⁶ '[...] But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under the juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him and said unto him, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God' (1 Kings 19) (The King James version).

⁷ For the extant contracts related to the construction of the Val-de-Grâce, see Mignot C., "L'Église du Val-de-Grâce au faubourg Saint-Jacques de Paris: architecture et décor (nouveau documents 1645–1667)", *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire de l'art Française* (1975) 101–136.

⁸ Other paintings seized from the convent's refectory according to the inventory of 1793 include *Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee* (Musée des beaux-arts, Nantes) by Philippe de Champaigne, *Supper at Emmaus* (Cathedral of St. John, Lyon) and *The Manna in the Desert* (Church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, Paris) by Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne, and *Christ in the Desert Nourished by Angels* (no longer extant). See Tapié – Sainte Fare Garnot, *Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674)* 237. Olivier Bonfait mentions *the Supper at Emmaus* from the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Angers painted by Philippe de Champaigne in lieu of Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne's *Supper at Emmaus*; see Bonfait – MacGregor, *Le Dieu caché* 97–99. In the 2012 exhibition in the Musée Carnavalet, *The Sleep of Elijah* and *The Manna in Desert* by Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne were presented as two pendants; see Kazerouni G. – Imbert D. – Gouzi C. – Szanto M., *Les Couleurs du Ciel: Peintures des églises de Paris au XVII^e siècle* [exh. cat., Musée Carnavalet] (Paris: 2012) 289–305.

have been moved into the refectory during the rearrangement of private rooms of Anne of Austria after her death, where it would have remained until the property of the convent was expropriated by the revolutionaries.⁹ If the question of the painting's original placement cannot be definitively resolved through the documented evidence, the meditative, lyrical rendition of the theme of Elijah's sleep and the particular delicacy of its execution by Philippe de Champaigne create a strong argument in favor of its direct association with Anne of Austria's private devotional space.

The lyric tranquility of the setting chosen by Champaigne to protect Elijah's mighty sleep granted him in response to his solicitation of death, the tenderness of the angel's touch, the presence of nourishment that remained unacknowledged by the prophet, along with the destination of his forthcoming journey pointed to by the divine messenger, were not only the details in the faithful rendition of the biblical narrative but an invitation for a contemplative pause. This pause is further determined by the tone and quality of light in the painting, one source of which emanates mystically from the bodies of the two central characters, and another is presented as physical light coming from the distant landscape. The two lights – the physical and the divine – do not contradict each other. The precise time of Elijah's sleep, such as day or night, dusk or dawn, was not spelled out in the scriptural narrative.

In *The Sleep of Elijah*, Champaigne attempted to bring a temporal aspect into a painting representing a single action, one that encompassed a seizure of time corresponding to the state of sleep but also implied the ensuing duration of the prophet's forty-day journey signified in the distant landscape. A visual contemplation of an action of sleep, or rather of a forthright representation of inaction, provided the meditant with

⁹ A particular meditative mode and extreme elegance of execution sets *The Sleep of Elijah* apart from other paintings from the Val-de-Grâce. Its upper border shaped as a low arch indicates that the painting might have been framed to fit a specific architectural space. *The Sleep of Elijah* does not directly correspond to any of the three cycles of paintings executed by Philippe de Champaigne for the queen's second apartment located in the pavilion at the northeast side of the convent: a series of portraits of prominent empresses and queens for the queen's bedroom (not extant), a twelve-painting cycle "The Life of Saint Benedict" for the *chamber à l'alcôve* on the first floor, four landscapes with lives of anchorites and the *Apotheosis of Marie Magdalene* in the *plafond* in the rez-de-chaussée. Architect Le Muet added the pavilion to the convent complex in 1654–55. See Mignot C., *Le Val-de-Grâce. L'ermitage d'une reine* (Paris: 1994) 56–58; Rotmil L.A., *The Artistic Patronage of Anne of Austria (1601–1666)* (Ph.D. New York University, Institute of Fine Arts: 2000) 259–276.

an intimate template for internal prayers in which she could imitate the prophet's itinerary and share his interminable faith in and love for God. By choosing the moment of sleep as a pictorial object for visual and spiritual concentration, Champagne also affirmed the continuity of physical and spiritual vision that was developed particularly in the theology of Saint Augustine and that mandated production of religious images in Counter-reformation France. In her exemplary study of Saint Augustine's theory of vision, Margaret Miles underscores that just as in the act of physical vision the will for knowledge unifies the object and the viewer, 'so in the vision of God, it is love, "a stronger form of will" (*De trinitate* 15.21.41), that in the activity of loving, connects and unites human longing with God's activity of love'.¹⁰

The Queen as Elijah

Upon her arrival in France in 1615, Anne aspired to continue her active life in faith, as she perceived her role as both a sovereign of her new country and a true heir of Spanish Catholicism. The oldest daughter of Philip III and Margarita of Austria, the Infanta Ana Maria Mauritia was steeped in the perpetuity of religious rituals and court duties since her early childhood. The future queen of France's religious formation, education, and visual experiences were shaped by the royal palace of Escorial with its monastery of St. Lawrence and the Convent of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid.¹¹ Practicing religious rites in a monastic setting but in a close proximity to the royal palace was a routine that the infanta Anna learned from her mother, Marguerite of Austria.¹² Don Diego de Guzmán, Anna's personal tutor until her departure for France, wrote a hagiographic account of her mother's life as a didactic example for filial imitation.¹³ The Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Archduchess of Austria and Anne's aunt, established

¹⁰ Miles M., "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's 'De trinitate' and 'Confessions'", *The Journal of Religion* 63, 2 (1983) 135.

¹¹ Las Descalzas Reales, the convent of the Order of Santa Clara established in 1559 by Dona Juana de Austria (Joanna of Austria), was central to the religious practices of the Habsburg family in general, and was particularly supported by their female members.

¹² See Sánchez M., *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore: 2002) 140. A direct passageway linked the convent of the Incarnation established by Queen Margaret in 1611, not long before her death, to the Real Alcázar palace.

¹³ Guzmán Diego de, *Reyna catolica: vida y muerte de D. Margarita de Austria Reyna de España* (Madrid, Luis Sanchez: 1617).

another paradigm of a virtuous Catholic ruler that the younger Habsburg princess aspired to imitate.

In the wake of the Counter-reformation movement, the house of the Habsburgs took the leading position in the defense of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist according to the decrees of the Thirteenth Session of the Council that assembled in Trent in 1551.¹⁴ In the monastery of the Descalzas Reales, patronized by the Habsburg family, the cult of the Holy Eucharist merged with the iconography of Saint Claire, often depicted with a monstrance, one of her main attributes. Painted processions, such as *The Procession of Santa Clara* by Juan de Valdés Leal, were essential in perpetuating the symbolism of the Eucharist through fixed and re-enacted rituals.¹⁵ The Infanta Isabella's commission of the series of tapestries of *The Triumph of the Eucharist* designated to decorate the monastery of the Descalzas Reales on the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi and on Good Friday was an expression of her devotional ties to the spiritual *penates* of her family, but it was also a political statement on the steady link between the Habsburg family and the Catholic revival.¹⁶

As the queen and later as the regent, Anne of Austria played an active role in the adoration of the Eucharist, in keeping with the tradition established by her family in Spain. In the print by Gregoire Huret, Anne, then queen regent, directs the Dauphin's gesture of offering his scepter and the crown to the apparition of the monstrance with the Blessed Sacraments handed to the king and his mother by angels [Fig. 2]. The print underscored the future king's commitment to the exaltation of the Sacraments by means of building monasteries and converting Paris, a *civitas terrena*, into a *civitas Dei*, a site marked by an infinite number of churches.¹⁷ The gesture of offering the investitures of earthly power to Christ represented as a Holy Eucharist by the seven-year-old Dauphin in the embrace of his mother replicates the similar gesture of Louis XIII represented in the 1638

¹⁴ Tanner N.P. (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: 1990) II 693–698.

¹⁵ García Sanz A. – Triviño M.V., *Iconografía de Santa Clara en el Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales* (Madrid: 1993) 41–52; Tormo E., *En las Descalzas Reales de Madrid: estudios históricos, iconográficos y artísticos* (Madrid: 1915).

¹⁶ Mâle E., *L'art religieux après le concile de Trente* (Paris: 1932) 65; Vincent-Cassy C., *Les saintes vierges et martyres dans l'Espagne du XVII^e siècle: Culte et image* (Madrid: 2011) 111; Scribner C. III, *The Triumph of the Eucharist. Tapestries Designed by Rubens* (Ann Arbor: 1977) 16.

¹⁷ Some impressions of the print are inscribed: 'Ludovicus XIV. Anna Austriaca Parens, RR Christianissimi/Sacro-Sanctae Hostiæ Diuionenfis venerabundi Clientes, Baculum, cultus exhibendi Tesseram, par manus acceptum Solemniter tradiderunt Die XVIII. Iunij, An. M. DC. XXXV'.



Fig. 2. Grégoire Huret, *Louis XIV Offering his Scepter and Crown to Jesus Christ in the Form of Holy Ghost*, 1643. Engraving. © Paris, La Bibliothèque National de France.

painting by Philippe de Champaigne [Fig. 3]. The painting celebrated Louis XIII's consecration of his kingdom to the Holy Virgin. Anne as the queen regent expanded the vows of her deceased spouse by directing her son towards the veneration of the Holy Sacrament, thus re-affirming the perpetuation of the rite by her family.

A print by Stefano della Bella supplies further evidence of Anne of Austria's dedication to the public ceremonies of veneration of the Holy



Fig. 3. Philippe de Champaigne, *The Vow of Louis XIII*, c. 1638. Oil on canvas, 3,420 × 2,675 mm. Caen, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo credit: Scala/White Images/Art Resource, NY.

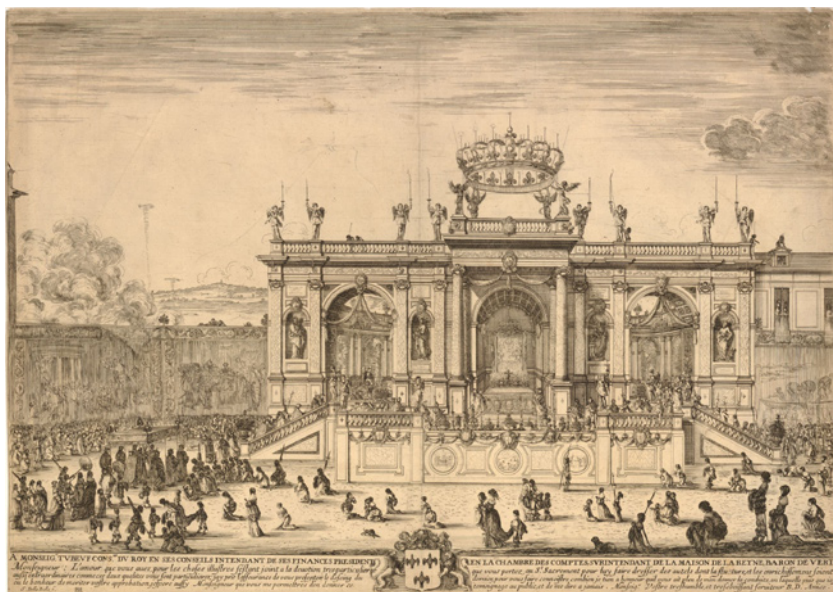


Fig. 4. Stefano della Bella, *A Procession with the Holy Sacrament*, c. 1648. Etching, 337 × 480 mm. London, The British Museum.

Eucharist [Fig. 4]. In the print, the queen regent and the young Louis XIV followed by courtiers march behind a monstrance with the Holy Sacrament carried under the baldachin. Flanked by a genuflecting crowd, the procession moves to the tripartite arched structure with the altar in the center in the background of the print. One of the walls of the structure is decorated with a tapestry after Raphael's *The Deeds of Apostles* in the Vatican. Tentatively related to the procession of the Holy Sacrament that took place in 1648, the print carries a dedication to Jacques Tubeuf, Intendant et contrôleur des bâtiments de la Reine, who supervised the construction of the Val-de-Grâce from 1645 on.¹⁸

Although the construction of the new Val-de-Grâce dedicated to the Virgin is often interpreted as an emblem of Anne's gratitude for the miracle of *Louis Dieudonné's* birth, the chapel of the Holy Sacrament occupied the central position on the axis of the church in the plan delineated by

¹⁸ Vesme A. de – Massar P.D., *Stefano della Bella. Catalogue raisonné*, 2 vols. (New York: 1971) II 62–63.

François Mansart, the convent's first architect.¹⁹ The spatial relationship between the high altar of the church and the altar of the Holy Sacrament separated by a lattice screen highlights the chapel's doctrinal significance. The enlargement of the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament by Lemer cier and later by Le Muet made the chapel accessible to the sight of the nuns, who venerated the Holy Sacraments through the grille of the nuns' choir, and to the queen, who could enter the chapel through the choir while lodging in the convent. In this case, as historian Pierre Lemoine noted, 'religious thinking is supported directly by the plan'.²⁰

The new convent was also a tribute to Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze, Anne's spiritual teacher and the first abbess of the monastery, whom she encountered shortly after her arrival in France. The queen and Mère Marguerite shared several spiritual concerns: they both admired Saint Teresa's mysticism maintained by the Carmelites, valued the power of the focused meditative exercises, and thought of urban monasticism as a form of spiritual retreat.²¹ Most importantly, the queen and her spiritual mentor sought to maintain the letter and spirit of the Council of Trent's statutes through the reform of the existing monastic orders.

With the support of the queen, Mère Marguerite was named the abbess of the convent of the Val-de-Grâce of the Holy Crib that Anne envisioned as a site for her personal retreat. The monastery's constitution followed the rules of the Order of Saint Benedict revised in accordance with the

¹⁹ Peter Smith confirmed Jean-Marie Perouse de Montclos's suggestion that Mansart's plan of the Val de-Grâce drafted in 1644 echoed the layout of the Escorial. See Smith P., "Mansart Studies II: The Val de Grâce", *Burlington Magazin* 106, 732 (1964) 104–115, and Perouse de Montclos J.-M., *Histoire de l'architecture française de la Renaissance à la Révolution* (Paris: 1989) 186. On the political and gender aspects of Anne's patronage of the monastery, see also Germann J., "The Val-de-Grâce as a portrait of Anne of Austria: Queen, Queen Regent, Queen Mother", in Hill H. (ed.), *Architecture and the Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot – Burlington, VT: 2003) 47–62.

²⁰ Lemoine P., "L'Abbaye Royale de Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce", in *Trésor d'art sacré à l'ombre du Val-de-Grâce* (Paris: 1988) 78.

²¹ Two hagiographies of Mère Marguerite published in the seventeenth century – Ferraige Jacques, *La vie admirable, et digne d'une fidele imitation, de la Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze, ditte de Sainte Gertrude* (Paris, F. Dehors: 1628), and Fleury Claude, *La vie de la vénérable mere Marguerite d'Arbouze, abbesse et reformatrice de l'Abbaye royale du Val-de-Grace* (Paris, Chez la Veuve Gervais Clouzier: 1684) – highlighted the abbess's meticulous search for a monastic community suitable for her faith. Mère Marguerite took her vows in the Benedictine convent of Montmartre, however, she seriously considered the orders of Carmel and Saint Claire as her possible destination. Ferraige, *La vie* 12. Mère Marguerite revered religious mysticism and learned Italian and Spanish, while a novice in Lyon, in order to read the works of Saint Teresa of Avila and other new saints in their original languages. See Fleury, *La vie* 9.

Council of Trent's doctrines. The constitution stipulated the strictest schedule of offices and austerity in daily life. In addition, Mère Marguerite instituted continuous prayers in front of the monstrance with the Holy Sacrament exposed in the high altar during the so-called 'fat days' (*jours gras*) that were marked by a particular strictness in her community.²² Many of Mère Marguerite's novices found it difficult, or even excessive, as her biographers admitted, to follow the abbess's rule of two hours of internal prayer (*l'oraison mentale*) per day that she requested from her sisters. These exercises were divided into two half-hour segments to be taken after Lauds and the Prime to be followed by an exercise of one hour after vespers.²³

Anne of Austria's steady patronage of the monastery along with her promise to beautify Mère Marguerite after her death testifies to the paramount importance of the abbess's spiritual guidance for the queen.²⁴ A *Treatise on the Internal Prayer* (*La Traité de L'Oraison Mentale*) that Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze composed in the early 1620s exposes the spectrum of spiritual training that Anne of Austria along with other students of the abbess could have received.²⁵ Inspired by other monastic writers of the Counter-reformation period, and particularly by Saint Teresa of Avila, Mère Marguerite laid out a didactic foundation for perfecting an internal meditation in progressive degrees of difficulty by drawing on the symbolic mental pictures associated with Christ and divine love. The phoenix burning itself in the flame (a symbol of resurrection and eternal life), the inflamed heart (a symbol of divine love), and a mountain (a symbol of Christ and his church) were the most recurring visual templates that the author recommended to her students. These images permeated the treatise and served as continuous sensorial activators of the process of prayers. Mental pictures evoked by Mère Marguerite suggest that the process of internalization of the image of Christ was strongly engrained in abbess's students.

In the beginning of her treatise, Mère Marguerite drew a comparison between the actual and the spiritual hunger that she correlated with the

²² Ibidem 126–27.

²³ Ibidem 128.

²⁴ According to Henri Bremond, Anne made a vow at the altar of the Holy Sacrament, her usual prayer station, to beautify Mère Marguerite after her death if the abbess's prayers would help her to conceive a child; Bremond H., *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: 1916–33) II 485–486.

²⁵ Arbouze Marguerite Vény D', *Exercice journalier pour les religieuses bénédictines de Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce avec un Traité de l'oraison mentale* (Paris, Billaine: 1676).

senses of physical and divine nourishments. A meditative exercise, as she pointed out, was an equivalent of the daily bread that a famished soul seeks for its nourishment. With the image of bread, the abbess referred her students to the Holy Eucharist, while in structuring the levels of the internal prayer she strove to prepare her students for the progressive ascent toward the union with Christ. The process of spiritual ascension, in Mère Marguerite's interpretation, relied on the figuration of rising, elevation, and height achieved through the evocation of the two most frequently recurring figures in the treatise: the phoenix and the mountain.

To keep the fire of continuous love of God inside one's soul, as Mère Marguerite instructed, 'one should have an intention to live higher than people in general and aspire a singular perfection that one must search by means of praying on the mountain of God. the mountain of God'.²⁶ In the final chapter of her treatise, entitled 'The Means for Keeping the Love of God in Prayer' ('Le moyen pour conserver l'amour de Dieu dans l'Oraison'), Mère Marguerite examined the highest technique of internal prayers that assist in sustaining the moment of spiritual elevation in prayers. This momentous height, as the abbess explained, was not an end in its own but only one of the many consecutive heights that one ought to conquer on the road to perfectibility. The bread that the prophet Elijah was given in his sleep exemplified the divine nourishment as a provisional sustenance for a continuous journey of the prophet, or a symbol of the infinite work that a Christian soul should do, sustained by this nourishment:

But again being on the mountain of prayer, where the bread of grace is given by the spirit of grace, it is necessary to remember that not all is accomplished yet and that this celestial meat is given to us as the bread baked on coals was given to Elijah to fortify our hearts on the road to perfection, in which there remains many paths to ascend because of the limitless depth of God's infinity [...].²⁷

²⁶ 'Pour vivre de cet amour, il faut avoir le dessein de vivre plus hautement que le commun des hommes & aspirer à la perfection singuliere qu'on doit aller chercher par l'*Oraison en la montagne* du Seigneur, où le saint Prophete nous appelle pour apprendre ses voyes' (emphasis mine); D'Arbouze, *Traité* 92.

²⁷ 'Mais encore estant en cette montagne d'Oraison, où le pain de grace nous est communiqué par l'esprit de grace; il se faut souvenir que tout n'est pas fait, & que cette viande celeste nous est donnée comme le pain cuit sous la cendre fut donné au Prophete Elie, pour fortifier nos cœurs en la voye sainte de la perfection, dans laquelle il nous reste toujours beaucoup de chemins à faire, puisque les limites en sont infinis dans l'infinité de Dieu'; *ibidem* 140–41.

Anne of Austria's meditation on *The Sleep of Elijah* could be linked to the lesson of Elijah's bread as a symbol of divine grace given to a soul in preparation for the unbounded work of spiritual perfection that the queen learned from Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze earlier in her life. The conduct of one's life in imitation of Elijah's journey of forty days to the top of Mount Horeb was in some ways a legacy of the queen's spiritual mentor, which Champaigne was invited to visualize.

In the frontispiece to Jacques Ferraige's biography of Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze published in 1628, soon after the abbess's death, the queen and the Abbess kneel in front of the altar with a monstrance, while the scene of the Adoration of the Magi, flanked by the figures of the angel and the Virgin from the Annunciation, serves as a altarpiece to the imaginary altar [Fig. 5]. The frontispiece, designed and engraved by Crispijn de Passe, suggests that Anne and Mère Marguerite envisioned their new monastery as dedicated to the veneration of the Holy Sacrament and to the miraculous birth of Christ at once. The inscription of these two themes, exemplary for the Counter-reformation's politics, into the Val-de-Grâce's initial theological program is anticipatory of Anne's personal history constructed through the miracle of her motherhood that was linked to her skillful and generous prayers later. The frontispiece by Crispijn de Passe indicates that the iconographic program of the Val-de-Grâce implemented in the 1640–1650s, after Louis XIV's birth, emerged from its earlier instantiations. The monastery's regal patron's devotional life epitomized the themes that were established by the convent's first abbess.²⁸

Mère Marguerite's treatise on *The Internal Prayer* was a practical manual written for her students and was generously supplied with references to her favorite spiritual writers, such as Saint Bernard, Saint Gregory the Great, Saint Peter Chrysologus, Saint Bonaventure, and Origen, among others. Saint Thomas Aquinas was Mère Marguerite's most preferred author. According to her first biographer, she read his *Summa Theologica* several times.²⁹ The abbess's particular interest in Aquinas's work was not unusual for a leader of a monastic order pursuing the goals of the Catholic revival. The adoration of the Eucharist celebrated in Aquinas's Office of the Sacrament stood as the pinnacle of the Christocentric mysticism of the Counter-reformation movement. In France, the spirituality of

²⁸ On the role of monastic superiors in defining the iconographic programs of the Counter-reformation churches see Mâle E., *L'art religieux après le concile de Trente* (Paris: 1932) 16.

²⁹ Bremond H., *Histoire littéraire* 492.



Fig. 5. Crispijn de Passe, Frontispiece to Jacques Ferraige, *La Vie admirable de la B. Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze, dite de Sainte-Gertrude* (Paris: 1628). Engraving. © The Dom Edmond Obrecht Collection of Gethsamani Abbey, Trappist, KY on permanent loan to the Center for Cistercian and Monastic Studies, Special Collections Department, Western Michigan University.

adoration was governed by the principle of 'states of the incarnate verb' ('les états du Verbe incarné') developed by Cardinal Pierre Bérulle, a prominent Counter-reformation theologian. This principle, based on the integration of a religious subject's interior life into the life of Christ, was realized, in F. Ellen Weaver's words, 'not by imitating the example of Christ, but by a real transfusion into the Christian of Christ's spiritual activity – His prayer, His sentiments, etc. – a psychological transformation accomplished through meditation on the psychological states of Christ, but above all through the Sacraments'.³⁰ The centrality of the Eucharistic devotion was particularly important for seventeenth-century France, given that the decrees of the Council of Trent were never officially introduced into the country.³¹ The defense and adoration of the Holy Sacrament established a shared ground for different monastic institutions and private religious initiatives that often appeared in opposition to each other in their interpretation of certain aspects of Catholic doctrine.

Elijah and the Douceur of Champagne

How does the *The Sleep of Elijah* manifest its essentially Eucharistic meaning and achieve its function of a private meditative image against the variety of other meanings that the figure of this prophet might have signified in seventeenth-century Christian iconography? The Carmelites, for example, who placed Elijah the anchorite at the foundation of their order and made the site of his disputation with the priests of Baal eponymous to the institution itself, aligned their monastic identity with the figure of the prophet. 'It is difficult to imagine a more poetic story that the one presented by the Carmes in the beginning of seventeenth century,' noted Emile Mâle.³² The Carmelite overtones in Champagne's Elijah would not seem at odds with the Val-de-Grâce's main theme of the virginity of the Mother of Christ and her son's miraculous nativity. I intend to demonstrate, however, how the theme of spiritual communion and the concept of accidents as proxy for the substance during the Eucharistic transformation, according to the writings of Thomas Aquinas, prevails in *The Sleep of Elijah* over other possible meanings.

³⁰ Weaver E.F., *The Evolution of the Reform of Port-Royal. From the Rule of Cîteaux to Jansenism* (Paris: 1978) 96.

³¹ Ibidem 94.

³² Mâle, *L'art religieux* 64.

The inclusion of the subject of the Sleep of Elijah in the multipartite altarpieces dedicated to the Holy Sacraments follows the diffusion of the Corpus Christi Office composed by Thomas Aquinas in 1264. The Office itself, however, had no provisions as to what would correspond to its content in visual terms.³³ Champaigne's figuration of the encounter between Elijah and the angel follows in general the representations of this episode by Flemish artists, such as, for example, by Dieric Bouts in the polyptych of the *Holy Sacraments* from the Church of Saint Peter in Louvain and by Ambrosius Francken I in the cover panel of the triptych *The Last Supper* from the altar of the Holy Sacrament at St. Joriskerk in Antwerp.³⁴ Champaigne's application of the Sleeping Elijah type established in the Flemish tradition along with his appropriation of the formal structure of the print on the same subject by Johannes Sadeler I after Maarten de Vos's drawing underpins the Val-de-Grâce painting's iconography.³⁵ Rubens's designs for the set of tapestries "The Triumph of the Eucharist" commissioned by the Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia were the most outstanding contemporaneous example demonstrating the significance of the figure of Elijah in the defense of the Eucharist. The selection of the encounter between Elijah and the angel for Rubens's cycle celebrating The Triumph of the Eucharist provided a strong motivation for the inclusion of *The Sleep of Elijah* in the pictorial programs of the monastery of Val-de-Grâce [Fig. 6].³⁶ Demonstrating its open visual dissimilarity

³³ The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* mentions three Old Testament prefigurations of the Last Supper – the Meeting of Abraham and Mechizedek, the Gathering of the Manna, and the Passover. See Lutz J. – Perdrizet P., *Speculum humanae salvationis, texte critique. Traduction inédite de Jean Mielot (1448). Les sources et l'influence iconographique principale sur l'art alsacien du XIV^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1907–1909) I 35, 134–135, 205. Thomas Aquinas refers to the nourishment of Elijah before his journey to Mount Horeb in Question 79 of Book III of his *Summa Theologica*, in the chapter discussing the effects and the accidentals of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

³⁴ The story of Elijah and the Angel appears in Flemish altarpieces relatively frequently. For the select list of Last Supper triptychs, see Poorter N. de, *The Eucharist Series*, 2 vols., Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 2 (London: 1978) I 193; the iconography of prophet Elijah is also discussed in Emond C., *L'Iconographie carmélitaine dans les anciens Pays Bas méridionaux* (Brussels: 1961).

³⁵ The sleep of Elijah was relatively rarely treated by the French artists of Champaigne's generation, despite the popularity of Carmelite iconography. Laurent de la Hyre painted *The Sleep of Elijah* along with its pendant *The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek* for the tabernacle of the Capuchin Convent in Le Marais around 1635–1636; see Rosenberg P. – Thuillier J., *Laurent de la Hyre 1606–1656. L'homme et l'oeuvre* (Geneva: 1988) 165–167.

³⁶ Champaigne might have been familiar with Rubens's designs primarily through the prints published after the bozzetti and cartoons executed in Rubens's studio in Antwerp. On the particularities of Champaigne's artistic relationship to Rubens, see particularly Merle de Bourg, A., *Peter Paul Rubens et la France* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: 2004) 150–155.



Fig. 6. Willem Paneels (etcher), Peter Paul Rubens (after), *Elijah Fed by an Angel*, c. 1631. Etching, 153 × 119 mm. London, The British Museum.

to Rubens's composition, in which Elijah is shown as fully awake and standing by the angel's side, Champaigne relates his Elijah to that of Rubens symbolically by establishing a sacramental link between the two Habsburg princesses – Infantas Isabella and Anne, Isabella's niece – and between the Descalzas Reales, the home monastery of the Habsburg family, and the new monastery of Val-de-Grâce founded by Queen Anne in perpetuation of her family tradition of active faith.

Unlike any of the earlier precedents of *The Sleep of Elijah*, Champaigne's tableau was not designated to adorn an altarpiece in the monastery, where the story of Elijah's sleep could have been supported by the other figures of Eucharist. While its links with the paintings from the presumed refectory cycle appear sustainable on the typological level, the episode of Elijah's encounter with the angel could have functioned also as an autonomous meditative tableau that was produced as a devotional aid to a continuous spiritual communion with Christ, or, more specifically, as a visual instantiation of *viaticum*, provisions for a journey into the life in faith. *Viaticum* as a form of the last communion given to those in danger of death was confirmed in the Catechism of the Council of Trent: 'Sacred writers call it the Viaticum as well because it is the spiritual food by which we are supported in our mortal pilgrimage, as also because it prepares for us a passage to eternal glory and happiness'.³⁷ One might expect that a disciplined student of Catholic doctrine such as Anne of Austria could have commissioned a painting meditating on the notion of *viaticum* among other subjects either before or when she learned about her terminal disease. It is also not surprising that she conferred such a commission on the artist with whom she shared a profound affinity in matters of faith. In his *Entretiens*, André Félibien, a writer who was not particularly prone to share with his readers many private aspects of his characters, described Champaigne as a person of natural kindness, serious and solemn manners, and a man of clear conscience.³⁸

Even though Champaigne explored the existing iconography of the prophet Elijah, he experimented with giving certain self-sufficiency to the moment of the prophet's sleep, an approach that complicated a more straightforward typological reading of his figure in the multipartite altarpieces. The prominence of Elijah's mysterious sleep required a

³⁷ *The Catechism of the Council of Trent published by Command of Pope Pius the Fifth*, trans. J. Donovan (Dublin: 1928) 208.

³⁸ 'C'étoit un homme d'un naturel doux, d'un maintien sérieux & grave, & d'une conscience droite'; Félibien André, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes Dixième Entretien* (Trévoux, S.A.S.: 1725) 327.

command of exegetical reading from the artist. Among several sources that Champaigne might have consulted considering the Eucharistic meaning of the Sleep of Elijah, I am particularly highlighting but not singling out *Summa Theologica* by Thomas Aquinas and Louis Richeome's *Tableaux sacrez des figures mystiques du tres-auguste sacrifice et sacrement de l'Eucharistie*. These two sources represent to me the extreme ends of the spectrum across which other devotional and/or visual sources could be spread – a doctrinal aspect of the Holy Sacrament explained by Aquinas, on the one hand, and a deictic compendium of Eucharistic '*figures*', a set of prolix ekphrastic pictures by Richeome, on the other. Champaigne's task, I suggest, was to expand an established typological meaning of the figure of Elijah by means of folding the progression of the scriptural narrative into the stasis of its central figure. The anagogical meaning implied in Champaigne's treatment of the scriptural narrative helped to sustain the progressive, temporal aspect of the meditative procedures that his painting invited.

The scriptural narrative underlying the pictorial Elijah contained several events: Elijah's escape from the wrath of Jezabel, Elijah's plea for death, a sleep to which Elijah succumbs (a non-action in pictorial terms), the angel's speech addressed to the prophet, and, finally, his ensuing journey to the top of Mount Horeb. None of these actions could have been rendered as simultaneous events according to the rules of academic doctrine that Champaigne, as one of the leaders of the *Académie de peinture et de sculpture*, professed. Hence, he decidedly gave the preference to the state of repose, leaving the preceding and ensuing motions of his character outside the limits of his canvas. The reclined figure of the prophet positioned diagonally across the lower register of the canvas constitutes the focus of the composition. A loaf of bread and a ewer placed at Elijah's head are adjacent to his figure, though separated from him by a loop of his cape and visible to the viewer but unacknowledged by the sleeping prophet. The second figure in the painting, that of the Messenger of God, offsets the horizontality of Elijah's body and is imbued with motion, or just-about-to-be-seized motion, as the floating roseate-red cape of the angel wrapped around one of his still flapping wings indicates. It is unclear whether the angel's feet touch the ground completely, or his body hovers over the ground: Elijah's figure covers the angel's legs up to the knees, making his *contrapposto* body still redolent of the implied movement. The pearl-colored robe of the Messenger of God absorbs the light that emanates from Elijah's face, arms, and blue-violet robe. The light that glows from Elijah and the Angel negates the shadow from the juniper tree that ought to protect Elijah's rest.

Why did Champaigne assign such a pictorial and narrative value to the state of sleep? In the print by Johannes Sadeler after Maarten de Vos's drawing, one of the recognized sources for Champaigne's composition, the prophet reacts to the touch of the angel and even grabs his stuff in preparation for the journey. While repeating the placement and outlines of the print after de Vos, Champaigne changed decidedly the meaning of the earlier composition [Fig. 7]. Faithful to the scriptural text, Champaigne exposed the interiority of the prophet's sleep and left no signs of his reaction to the Angel's command. This choice is crucial for understanding Champaigne's work as a visual interpreter of the Bible. Respecting the silence of the scriptural text in relation to Elijah's reaction the words of the messenger, or to the reason of his falling asleep the second time after eating some bread, Champaigne's presentation of Elijah suggests no degree of psychological motivation inside his character other than what is described in the biblical text. In this scrupulous loyalty to the text, Champaigne asserted that the logic of a biblical action was different from that of history painting because the meditative approach to the painting allowed the beholder to perceive a given action in relation to the entirety of the scriptural text. In Champaigne's interpretation, Elijah's dormant state did not have to be explained by a legible 'reaction', but should be rendered in its unadorned plainness and given to the internal meditative work of the beholder. Elijah's sleep, however, was not indifferently static but was sustained by the meditant's intense contemplation of the depth of Elijah's unwavering faith.

Commenting on the unexpressed thoughts and feelings of the characters in the Elohistic text, Eric Auerbach emphasized the depth of the 'background' in sustaining the unrelieved suspense and often unexplainable mystery of scriptural events compared to the clearly laid out, highlighted 'foreground' of actions in the Homeric stories:

[...] the human beings in the Biblical stories have greater depths of time, fate, and consciousness of what has happened to them earlier and elsewhere; their thoughts and feelings have more layers, are more entangled. Abraham's actions are explained not only by what is happening to him at the moment, not yet only by his character [...] but by his previous history; he remembers, he is constantly conscious of what God has promised him, and what God has already accomplished for him – his soul is torn between desperate rebellion and hopeful expectation; his silent obedience is multi-layered, has background.³⁹

³⁹ Auerbach E., "Odysseus' Scar," in *Mimesis* (Princeton: 1968) 12.



Fig. 7. Maarten de Vos, *The Prophet Elijah in the Wilderness, Awoken by an Angel*, 1581. Pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash, black chalk on paper, 239 × 206 mm. © Paris, Institute Néerlandais, Fondation Custodia.

Champaigne's choice of picturing the moment of the prophet's sleep as a 'multilayered' sleep, in Auerbach's terms, and rendering it in the full splendor of his painterly technique, testifies to the artist's apprehension of a particular poetics operating in such scriptural narrative.

Champaigne's focused attention to the state of sleep corresponded to Louis Richeome's interpretation of the same episode in the *Tableaux sacrez des figures mystiques du tres-auguste sacrifice et sacrement de*

l'Eucharistie.⁴⁰ Richeome's treatise confirmed the indexical link between the bread of Elijah (*le pain d'Élie*) and the mystery of the Eucharist: 'The bread of Elijah makes certainly a figure of our Sacrament and many other mysteries that are hidden in it'.⁴¹ By suggesting that the figure of Elijah might hold the key to 'many other mysteries' contained in the mystery of Eucharist, Richeome expanded a typological reading of Elijah as a prefiguration of the Eucharist into a temporal dimension that a continuous construction of mental images required. Accordingly, Champaigne's *Sleep of Elijah* incorporated certain meditative extensions in the system of classical painting organized according to the academic rule of a single action, a format that functioned differently from the system of the textual-visual apparatus of a printed book or from earlier devotional paintings.⁴² The condition of history painting did not prevent Champaigne from a disciplined adherence to a scriptural narrative as he took the scriptural text as an already existing figuration and a visual platform shared between the artist and the supplicant. Champaigne's loyalty to the scriptural word in religious painting contradicted the growing autonomy of painting as a specific medium articulated in academic theory of the period.⁴³

What other mysteries does Champaigne's dormant Elijah point to, given how elaborately Champaigne's handling of the brush laid out the magnificence of his sleep in front of the beholder? The artist made the handsome and graceful beauty of Elijah's face, delicately built up on translucent layers of paint, continuously pleasing to observe, as if the prophet's fears, his solicitation of death, and his physical exhaustion after the flight from Jezabel's wrath were fully wiped away. A quiet resignation of Champaigne's Elijah recalled another prescription by Richeome, according to

⁴⁰ Richeome dedicated this treatise to the queen, Marie de'Medici, Champaigne's first patron in Paris. A strong proponent of the devotional role of images, Richeome advised the queen to place religious paintings and tapestry in her private oratory as the visual figurations were supposed to help her in sustaining the meditative mood. Richeome's system of visual meditative aids is discussed in Smith J.C., *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation* (Princeton: 2002) 52.

⁴¹ 'Ce Pain d'Élie fut pour certain, une figure de nostre Sacrement & de plusieurs mysteres chachez en iceluy'; Richeome, *Tableaux* 305.

⁴² On engraved images as a part of an image-text apparatus, see Melion W.S., "Introduction. Christ as Subject and Source of Meditative Image-Making", in *The Meditative Art. Studies in the Northern Devotional Print 1550–1625* (Philadelphia: 2009) 1–36.

⁴³ A clash between Charles le Brun and Champaigne at the *conférence* held on 7 January 1668 over the absence of certain details from the scriptures in Poussin's *Éliézer and Rebecca* illustrates Champaigne's position. See Mérot A. (ed.) *Les Conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 2003) 130–139.

which the sight of the sleeping prophet should have led the meditant to a mental picture of the dead Christ 'sleeping on his cross' and to the recollection of his passions before the crucifixion.⁴⁴ The shadow cast by Elijah's flaccid body in the state of sleep, according to Richeome, should serve as a reminder of Christ's descent from the cross. Richeome observed: 'Elijah sleeps: this is the Christian soul that peacefully meditates on the sacrament of the altar, which is the shadow of Christ, that is to say, a commemoration of the death of the Savior, as it was said: as the shadow represents the body, so the Sacrament represents the passion, and as a body is present in its shadow so the body [of Christ] is present in the Holy Sacrament'.⁴⁵ The analogy between the state of sleep and death, already developed in ancient Greek and Latin literature, is used by Richeome as a mimetic device: it arrests any somatic motions of the meditant by sending her body into a imitative sleep-like state that would unite her heart with Christ sleeping on the cross.⁴⁶

Champaigne's rendition of a sleeping Elijah is mindful of the analogous sleeping figures from Scripture. The position of Elijah's arms and the configuration of his bent knees are reminiscent of *Jacob's Dream*, a plate from *Humanae salutis Monumenta* by Benedictus Arias Montanus [Fig. 8]. The rubric of divine philanthropy (*Dei Philantropiae*) that captions the *Sleep of Jacob* parallels the dormant states of Jacob and Elijah. Both scriptural characters obtained divine protection through the moment of sleep in their respective flights. Jacob's dream was endowed with a vision, while Elijah's experience of the divine intervention was not figurative and required only obedience to the command of God's messenger.

In the course of his work on religious subjects related to the state of sleep or repose, Champaigne developed a particular type of a reclined figure that he used with certain variations in *The Sleep of Joseph*, 1642, as the slaughtered Abel in *Adam and Eve Lamenting the Death of Abel*, 1656, and

⁴⁴ Léonard Gaultier, the printmaker who provided illustrations for Richeome's treatise, disregarded Richeome's parallel between the state of sleep and the dead Christ by depicting Elijah with an upright torso, as if the prophet responded to the angel's address.

⁴⁵ 'Elie dort: c'est l'âme Chretienne qui prend son repos en la meditation du Sacrement de l'Autel, qui est l'ombre, c'est à dire le memorial de la mort du Saveur, comme il a esté dict: car comme l'ombre represente le corps, ainsi le Sacrement represente la passion, & comme le corps est present avec l'ombre, ainsi le corps du Saveur au Saint Sacrement'; Richeome, *Tableaux* 312–13.

⁴⁶ See Constan N., "'To Sleep, Perchance to Dream': The Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001) 91–124. In some of Champaigne's *Crucifixions*, such as those, for example, in the Musée de Grenoble and in the National Gallery in Ottawa, the artist rendered Christ's face in a noticeably sleeping, reposing state.



Fig. 8. Pieter Huys (engraver), Pieter van der Borch (after), *Jacob's Dream*, plate 8 to Benito Arias Montano, *Humanae salutis Monumenta B. Ariae Montani studio constructa et decantata* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1571). Engraving. © Maurits Sabbelbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven.

as Christ in *The Vow of Louis XIII*, 1638.⁴⁷ These reiterations were not only a matter of the artist's pictorial economy prompting the re-use of images but also of the analogical figurative thinking that Champaigne developed. The same applies to the repertoire of gestures from the artist's visual lexicon, such as a pointing gesture given to the Angel in *The Sleep of Elijah*, that demonstrates further Champaigne's interpretation of the scriptural narratives as a system. The position of the angel's right arm with a stretched index finger from *The Sleep of Elijah* adapted the gesture of the Apostle, pointing to the figure of Christ, from Raphael's *Transfiguration*.⁴⁸ This visual evocation of an indexical gesture from *The Transfiguration*, a painting familiar to Champaigne through an engraving by Cornelius Cort published by Lanfrery in 1573, contained several registers of meaning. It was a recognizable pictorial adaptation that confirmed Raphael's authority as the canonical painter in seventeenth-century France. This adaptation also affirmed the roles of Elijah and Moses as witnesses to the revelation of Christ's divine nature on Mount Tabor. By exporting the pointing gesture from Raphael's famous altarpiece, then located in San Pietro in Montorio, Champaigne reinforced the typological links between the Old and the New Testaments, between the gesture of the apostle pointing to the figure of Christ and the gesture of the Angel indicating to Elijah his road to the mountain where he was to talk to God, and between Raphael, the stellar artist of Papal Rome, and himself, the painter of Anne of Austria, the herald and defender of Catholicism. Significantly, Champaigne deployed this pointing gesture derived from Raphael on several occasions. The archangel delivering the news of immaculate conception in the *Sleep of Joseph*, painted for a chapel of the Minim Monastery in Paris, and *Saint John the Baptist*, painted for the artist's oldest daughter Catherine de Sainte Suzanne on the occasion of her taking the vows at the Monastery of Port-Royal performed the same gesture [Fig. 9]. In the latter painting, the pointing gesture of the Baptist, directed into the depth of pictorial space, is particularly evocative as it draws the beholder to the figure of

⁴⁷ *The Sleep of Joseph* was designated for the chapel of St. Joseph in the Minim monastery at Place Royal in Paris; it was painted around 1638 (Dorival, *Philippe de Champaigne* II 21–22). The Archduke Leopold Guillaume, Governor of the Southern Provinces, commissioned *Adam and Eve Lamenting the Death of Abel*. The painting was executed during the artist's trip to Brussels in 1656, the year when Champaigne worked on the decoration of the new apartment of the queen in the Val-de-Grâce (ibidem II, 11–12). *Louis XIII Offering His Crown and His Scepter to the Virgin*, painted around 1637–1638, was originally placed in the Cathedral of Nôtre-Dame in Paris (ibidem II 104–105.)

⁴⁸ Bernard Dorival identified the source for the gesture of the angel (ibidem II 14).



Fig. 9. Philippe de Champaigne, *St. John the Baptist*, 1657. Oil on canvas, 1310 × 0980 mm. © Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble.

Christ, whose elusive contours emerge in the background. Saint John the Baptist's gesture becomes congruent to that of the angel in *The Sleep of Elijah*, pointing to Mount Horeb, an emblem of the figure of Christ and his church.⁴⁹ Consequently, the same gesture references the outbound movement for Elijah and the inbound movement for Christ and connotes subtly the typology of prefiguration between Elijah and Saint John the Baptist, equally an ardent anchorite.

With the figure of the Angel, Champaigne makes the presence of Raphael in his visual-exegetical circuit of *The Sleep of Elijah* even stronger. A close look at the facial features of the Angel sent to feed Elijah reveals its family resemblance to the titular figure from Raphael's *Archangel Michael Vanquishing Satan*, or *The Grand Saint Michael* [Fig. 10]. This parallel is not accidental for Champaigne as it came from his observation of the original Raphael that was kept in the French royal collection since the sixteenth century. Champaigne's Angel repeats that of Raphael in the rendering of the locks of blond hair parted in the middle, in the configuration of the shoulders, and in the motif of the arching cape wrapped around the left wing of the divine messenger. Champaigne's double iterations of Raphael's inventions – that of the Apostle's gesture pointing to the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Horeb, witnessed by Moses and Elijah, and that of the likeness of the archangel Michael – call attention to Elijah's role as the prophet who would be sent to the world to reveal the falsity of the Antichrist. At the end of the book of Malachi, Moses and Elijah come together as the two pillars of the kingdom of God, the former representing law and the latter exemplifying faith:

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.⁵⁰

The Carmelite exegete Dorothee de Saint René also underscored the role of Elijah as one of the witnesses to the end of times, or the last Eucharist. In his *Commentaire théologique, historique et moral, sur les livres des Roys*

⁴⁹ Champaigne presented *Saint John the Baptist* to his daughter on 14 October 1657, the day when she took the vows in the convent of Port-Royal. It was probably around the time when he completed the cycle of landscapes with anchorites for the apartment of Anne of Austria in the Val-de-Grâce.

⁵⁰ *Malachi* 4:4–6.



Fig. 10. Raphael, *St. Michel*, 1518. Oil on canvas (transferred from panel), Paris, Musée du Louvre © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

et de l'Apocalypse, où sont découvertes les grandeurs des saints prophètes, Élie et Elisée, Dorothée de Saint René considered the archangel Michael's victory over Satan as a prerequisite for the return of prophet Elijah on earth. He summoned them both to preside over the last council before the era of the kingdom of God.⁵¹

The exegetical insights of Père Dorothée Saint René, published in 1655, around the time when Champaigne worked on several commissions for the Val-de-Grâce, are pertinent, even if Champaigne's knowledge of Père Dorothée's writing cannot be verified. Champaigne's invocation of the archangel Michael by Raphael in his rendition of the Angel attending to Elijah's sleep, however, was deliberate. His assimilation of the Renaissance master's invention into the Eucharistic context of the representation of the prophet's sleep drew the matter of artistic imitation into the circle of doctrinal and exegetical correspondences.

In the system of Eucharistic references outlined in Champaigne's *Sleep of Elijah*, the figure of the mountain, as a site for divine revelation, as a destination of Elijah's journey, and as an imaginary summit of one's internal prayers, plays a crucial role. The transposition of the biblical topography into the topography of one's spiritual ascension underpinned the guidelines for internal prayers written by Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze. The concept of one's solitary dwelling in the mountainous landscape becomes a symbol of a spiritual ascension that also resonates in the lay discourses of the period.⁵² The importance of the theme of solitude corresponded to the expansion of religious landscape as a genre of painting in the period. Anne of Austria's selection of the meditative landscape with hermits as a devotional aid for her monastery's apartment underscores her interest in imitating the anchorite existence within the constraints of city life and court cultures.

⁵¹ 'Pour l'Ange, qui prie le Sauveur de mettre la faucille dans la moisson, j'estime que c'est Saint Michel, parce que l'Ange, don't il s'agit est selon les Interpretes deputé au nom de tous les Saints, & peut estre specialement de la part des Anges bien-heureux pour supplier sa Majesté de faire la moisson [...]. Pour l'autre Ange, qui preside au feu, & qui au nom des memes Saints, & particulièrement des âmes glorieuses poursuit la vendange des raisins, je me persuade avec Pannonius & quelques autres que c'est le Prophete Saint Élie'; Saint-René Dorothée de, *Commentaire théologique, historique et moral, sur les livres des Roys et de l'Apocalypse, où sont découvertes les grandeurs des saints prophètes, Élie et Elisée* (Paris, J. Julien: 1655) 442.

⁵² On the concept of '*retrait*' in seventeenth-century French culture, see Beugnot B., *Le discours de la retraite au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 1996) 209–250; on the theme of solitude in the religious writing from the period, see Lyons J.D., *Before Imagination: Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau* (Stanford: 1998) 73–5.

The magnificent landscape stretching behind the two figures in the Elijah story amplified the elegiac tone of the four landscapes with hermits painted by Champaigne for the *salle basse* of the queen's second apartment. The scenes from the life of Saint Benedict were also set as landscapes.⁵³ André Félibien noted that Anne of Austria enjoyed paying visits to the artist's studio while he worked on the life of Saint Benedict.⁵⁴ The queen's frequent visits expressed not only Anne's unwavering commitment to the monastery's visual programs but a level of spiritual kinship between the artist and the queen. A search for contemplative retreats was one of their shared ideals: Anne strove to build a monastery to serve for her urban withdrawal, while the artist moved his Parisian residence to the hills of Saint Marcel, or to 'the mountain,' as Félibien noted, to have the advantage of solitude and an escape from the numerous portrait commissions that diverted his attention from other themes in painting that interested him.⁵⁵ The year of 1647, so precisely chronicled by Félibien as the time of Champaigne's move to the suburbs of Paris, coincided with the publication of Robert Arnauld d'Andilly's translation of *Les Vies des saints Pères des deserts et de quelques saintes écrites par des Pères des l'Église et autres anciens auteurs ecclésiastiques*. In a few years after the publication, the queen regent selected four lives from the collection translated by the notable solitaire of Port-Royal to be painted for her private residence in the Val-de-Grâce.⁵⁶ The landscape in the *Sleep of Elijah* delivered the most distilled and spiritually condensed version of an imaginary biblical setting that Champaigne already rehearsed in the series dedicated to the anchorites based on Andilly's publication.

As I have already demonstrated, Mère d'Arbouze's treatise explained the technique of mental ascension to the mountain of prayers. The figure of

⁵³ The exact location of this cycle in the convent was not ascertained, however, some of the paintings had octagonal shapes, suggesting their placement over the doors. Bernard Dorival and Nicolas Sainte Fare Garnot dated the cycle around 1646, the period corresponding to the first campaign of the decorative works in the Val-de-Grâce. See Tapié – Sainte Fare Garnot, *Philippe de Champaigne* 226; Rotmil, *The Artistic Patronage* 264–69.

⁵⁴ [...] et de la Reine Regente, qui lui ordonna de peindre plusieurs sujets de la vie de Saint-Benoît, ausquels Sa Majesté prenoit plaisir à le voir travailler toutes les fois qu'elles alloit dans ce Monastere; Félibien, *Entretiens* 323.

⁵⁵ Ibidem 324.

⁵⁶ Arnauld d'Andilly Robert, *Les Vies des saints Pères des deserts et de quelques saintes écrites par des Pères des l'Église et autres anciens auteurs ecclésiastiques*, 2 vols. (Paris, J. Camusat et P. Le Petit: 1647–1653). Champaigne owned a copy of Andilly's translation and most possibly discussed it with the queen. See Dorival B., "La Bibliothèque de Philippe et de Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne", *Bibliothèque électronique de Port-Royal* 9 (2008) 2.

the mountain as one of the meditative exercises of *imitatio Christi* played a crucial role in counter-reformatory theology. In Nicolas Fontaine's *Dictionnaire Chretien où sur différens tableaux de la nature*, the mountain corresponds to the figure of God, the site of his dwelling according to *Psalms* 67:17.⁵⁷ The parallel between Jesus as the figure of the mountain and one's faith in him, as Fontaine reminded further, was established in *Matthew* 21:21.⁵⁸ Two more meanings of the mountain are emphasized by Fontaine, that of the sturdiness and eminence of the church of Christ that is made visible from any corner of the world, or the *montes aeternis*, and the mountain as a site of the collective dwelling of the apostles and fathers of the church. Anne of Austria remained loyal to the emblem of the mountain instilled in her by Mère Marguerite. In her portrait by the Beaubrun workshop, now in the Musée du service de santé des armées, Paris, Anne is positioned in front of a landscape with a mountain prominently featuring in the background. The devotional meaning of the mountain in this portrait is underscored by Anne's left hand holding a handkerchief, a symbol of her status as a widow, her bereavement, and the solace that she found in her faith.⁵⁹

In Champaigne's *Sleep of Elijah*, however, Mount Horeb appears less as a legible emblem but more as an implied yet barely visible formation that looms at a significant distance in the landscape. Presenting the discernment of Mount Horeb as a visual task for the meditant, Champaigne introduced the sense of the duration of the prophet's journey. The distance between the pointing gesture of the angel and the notional destination of the still-sleeping Elijah signified the condensed temporality of the scriptural narrative. Reducing the emblematic legibility of the mountain, Champaigne commanded the beholder to travel mentally through the gradually unfolding landscape. Though Champaigne had mastered fully the Flemish tradition, the level of pictorial definition in this landscape was more redolent of the classical tonal unity tinged with overtones from

⁵⁷ 'Ut quid suspicamini montes coagulatos mons in quo beneplacitum est Deo habitare in eo etenim Dominus habitabit in finem'. 'Why suspect, ye curdled mountains? A mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell: for there the Lord shall dwell unto the end'; *Psalms* 67:17. See, Fontaine Nicolas, *Le Dictionnaire Chretien où sur différens tableaux de la nature, l'on apprend, par l'Ecriture et les Saint Pères, à voir Dieu peint dans tous ses ouvrages et à passer des choses visibles aux invisibles* (Paris, E. Josset; 1691) 409.

⁵⁸ 'And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen".

⁵⁹ Dickey S., "Met een wenende ziel...doch droge ogen": Women Holding Handkerchiefs in Seventeenth-century Dutch Portraits", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46 (1995) 333–367.

Raphael. The diaphanous perspective and the silvery-blue tonality of the landscape facilitated the meditative shift from the luminous surfaces of the main characters in the foreground to the notional duration of the prophet's journey that the meditant could rehearse mentally.

The extension of the represented action into a future and the sense of duration of a journey up to the mountain of God strengthened the doctrinal aspect of the figure of Elijah in the mystery of the Eucharist. Thomas Aquinas's explanation of the results of taking the Eucharist and its lasting effects was grounded in the concept of *viaticum*, provisions for a journey that is given to a *viator*.⁶⁰ Elijah's encounter with the angel makes provisions for his further voyage, while his state of rest becomes the prerequisite for his future actions.

In Aquinas's theology of the Eucharist outlined in his *Summa Theologica* III, a religious subject's participation in the Eucharistic rites does not guarantee salvation, but serves as a precondition for its possibility. The partaking of the Eucharist becomes analogous to a journey of one's life through Christ's Passion time and again:

As Christ's Passion, in virtue whereof this sacrament is accomplished, is indeed the sufficient cause of glory, yet not so that we are thereby forthwith admitted to glory, but we must first 'suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified' afterwards 'with Him' (Rom. 8:17), so this sacrament does not at once admit us to glory, but bestows on us the power of coming unto glory. And therefore it is called 'Viaticum,' a figure whereof we read in 3 Kings 19:8: "Elias ate and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto the mount of God, Horeb."⁶¹

Aquinas's writing resonated strongly with the Counter-reformation defense of the Holy Eucharist against the Protestant attacks on the real presence of Christ in the transformation of substances and grace they signified. The Counter-reformation theology of the Eucharist designated a reception of *res tantum* as 'spiritual reception' and was understood as the purpose of the Eucharist that signified a union of active faith and love.⁶²

⁶⁰ The official translation of the Office of the Holy Sacrament by Thomas Aquinas appeared in French only in 1659. A free translation of the Office had been in circulation since 1620. See Corbin Jacques, *Deux Traitez Tres-Excellents du docteur Angelique, le bien-heureux S. Thomas, Du Sacrement du l'Eucharistie: L'un selon les dix Predicaments: L'autre extrait de sa Somme contre les Gentils* (Paris: 1620).

⁶¹ Aquinas T., *Summa Theologica* III, Q. 79, Art. 2, reply Obj. 1.

⁶² Macy G., "Theology of the Eucharist in the High Middle Ages," Levy I.C. – Macy G. – Ausdall K. (eds.), *A Companion to The Eucharist in the Middle Ages* (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 391.

The veneration of the Holy Sacrament remained central for the mission of the Val-de-Grâce. It is most likely that *The Sleep of Elijah* was commissioned in the light of this veneration. The defense of the Holy Sacrament supplied a certain unifying platform for monastic revival in seventeenth-century France, despite the emerging theological differences between several institutions, and between the institutions and the state. Champagne witnessed the revival of the cult of the Holy Sacrament not only as a religious artist but also as a religious subject. When he decided to entrust the upbringing of his two daughters to the nuns of Port-Royal in 1648, the institution had just completed its restructuring reflected in the new *Constitutions de Port-Royal*.⁶³ In the statutes of the Constitution, the convent assumed the name of the *Monastère de Port-Royal de la Vénération du St. Sacrement*, which crystallized its devotional and ideological strategies.⁶⁴ Mère Angélique Arnauld, portrayed by Philippe de Champaigne in 1648, was one of the key instigators of this constitution.

The Benedictine sisters of the Val-de-Grâce could not wait till the completion of the monastery to profess their dedication to the cult of the Eucharist. The first recorded procession of the Holy Sacrament took place on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin in February 1662, while the building was still in the process of construction. Le Maire recorded the sequence of the procession in considerable detail. Singing Aquinas's *Pange Lingua*, the procession, led by the high clerics and followed by Anne of Austria, moved to the high altar of the still-under-construction church where the mass was celebrated and the queen partook of the Sacrament, as Le Maire reported.⁶⁵ Another documented procession of the Holy Sacrament marked the feast of Saint Benedict in a just-completed chapel of Saint Anne in March 1665, again in the presence of the then gravely ill queen mother.⁶⁶ There can be little doubt that in its essentially Eucharistic content Champaigne's *Sleep of Elijah* contributed to these processions either as a meditative image observed in the private quarters of the queen or as a painting placed in the shared spaces of the convent along the path of these processions.

Philippe de Champaigne and his studio were largely responsible for providing the visual component of Anne of Austria's devotional retreat. The trust of the queen in the artist in conveying the full range of the

⁶³ Weaver, *The Evolution* 95–99.

⁶⁴ Ibidem 65–86.

⁶⁵ Le Maire Charles, *Paris Ancien et Nouveau*, 3 vols. (Paris, T. Girard: 1685) II 317–319.

⁶⁶ Ibidem 321.

monastery's doctrinal, official, and private significance was a sign of their shared faith. André Félibien, a writer often credited for polishing the vocabulary of French art discourses, opted for the word *douceur* to highlight the particularity of their artist-patron relations.⁶⁷ This notion of *douceur* (the sweetness and gentleness that he felt by serving the queen, according to Félibien) can be interpreted in merely social terms, as a matter of respect, courtesy, or even submissiveness in the vocabulary of the courtly *moeurs* of the period. Seen in the light of the religious character of the majority of Champaigne's commissions for Anne of Austria, however, the meaning of *douceur* comes closer to the qualities of Christian love and grace. Champaigne's cycles for the monastery of Val-de-Grâce, and particularly *The Sleep of Elijah*, strove for the essence and totality of the monastery's program as they were conveyed to the artist through his personal contact with Anne of Austria. This totality was not the climactic, centrally positioned entirety of the cupola *The Glory of the Righteous* painted by Mignard, but a more nuanced approach to the scriptural wholeness that Champaigne managed to understand in a variety of exegetical nuances. Impeccably precise in its adherence to the scriptural narrative, *The Sleep of Elijah* conveyed the immensity of divine grace that endowed visible things, represented things, even the things painted by the artist, as signs of the highest order. The queen who founded a Benedictine monastery and the painter who leaned towards Port-Royal's theology were first and foremost Catholic subjects. They shared the veneration of the invisible presence of the divine in the sacraments, a keystone of the Catholic doctrine, and they exchanged the *douceur* of Christian love and grace in the shared milieu of cultural transaction. Champaigne's paintings – the visible signs of the invisible mysteries – supported and expanded the invisible meditative work of the queen, the extent of which can never be measured by any court protocols, but is best understood by a compassionate love symbolized in Christian mysteries. In the words of Saint Augustine, 'There is indeed this which is common to the most holy Eucharist along with the other sacraments: it is a sign of sacred reality and the visible form of invisible grace'.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ 'Il est vrai que les obligations que Champagne avoit à cette Princess, & la douceur qu'il avoit goûtée en la servant, lui faisoient conserver pour elle beaucoup de reconnaissance & d'affection, & qu'il ne pouvoit se résoudre à se donner entièrement à celui que tous les serviteurs de la Reine regardoient alors comme une des principes causes de sa disgrâce'; Félibien, *Entretiens* 320.

⁶⁸ Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei* (City of God) X, 5; cited in the Tridentine decree on the Eucharist (Tanner [ed.], *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* II 694).

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III. EXEGETICAL IMAGERY OF SPIRITUAL CONFORMATION

'SEE THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; GO OUT AND MEET HIM':
ON SPIRITUAL PROGRESS AND MYSTICAL UNION IN EARLY
NETHERLANDISH PAINTING

Ingrid Falque

Jan van Ruusbroec's masterpiece (1293–1381), *Die geestelike brulocht* (*The Spiritual Espousals*), opens with a quotation from the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins, from the *Gospel of Matthew* (25:6), translated into Middle Dutch: 'Siet, de brudegom comt; Gaet ute hem te ontmoete'.¹ The bridegroom must, of course, be understood as Christ and the bride as the human soul searching for union with God. In the following paragraph, Ruusbroec places this quest for mystical union within the frame of the history of humankind as he continues to recall the history of man since his creation in the image and likeness of God. He then urges the reader to 'go out with all virtues, as He [Christ] says, and meet Him in the hall of glory, and enjoy Him without end in eternity'.²

Die geestelike brulocht is divided into three books, dealing respectively with the active life (*werkende leven*), the inner life (*innighe leven*), and the life of contemplation of God (*godscouwende leven*), which correlate with the three traditional steps of spiritual progression. Each of these books describes an encounter with God, and each of these descriptions is divided into four moments corresponding to the four parts of Matthew's

* This article is drawn from the last chapter of my doctoral dissertation: Falque I., *Portraits de dévots, pratiques religieuses et expérience spirituelle dans la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas (1400–1550)* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Liège: 2009). I would like to thank Elizabeth L'Estrange for her help with the English. My heartfelt thanks also go to the participants of the 2012 Lovis Corinth Colloquium for their questions and comments, and especially to Reindert Falkenburg for his stimulating reflections and his help with several issues raised by this research, as well as Bret Rothstein for his close reading of the text and his remarks.

¹ Ruusbroec Jan van, *Die geestelike brulocht. Opera Omnia* 3, ed. J. Alaers – G. de Baere – trans. H. Rolfson (Tielt – Turnhout: 1988), D151 (l. 1), E150 (l. 1). Here and in the following citations from Ruusbroec's *Opera omnia*, the letter D preceding the page number refers to the original passage in Middle Dutch, while the letter E refers to the English translation quoted in the main text.

² '(Op dat wij) ute gaen met allen duegden, alse hi spreekt, ende hem ontmoeten in die sale der glorien, ende sijns ghebruken zonder inde inder eewicheyt'. Ruusbroec, *Die geestelike brulocht* D153 (l. 34–36), E152 (l. 28–30).

quotation: 'See / the bridegroom cometh / Go out / to meet him'. The same pattern thus repeats itself in each book, on three successive levels, each higher than the previous one.³ As Ruusbroec states at the beginning of his book, his aim was to 'expound and explain these words [the sentence from Matthew] in three ways'.⁴ The biblical foundation of the tract thus becomes a leitmotiv, structuring its entirety. In this book, Ruusbroec takes his readers on a journey through a mystical progression, from the sensible and visible world to spiritual perfection and the heights of contemplation. As Geert Warnar explains, 'the verbs "expound" (*dieden*), "explain" (*ontbinden*) and "clarify" (*verclaren*) describe activities in the sphere of exegesis, instruction, and study'.⁵ While it is obvious that Ruusbroec showed interest in an analogical interpretation of the Scriptures, it is important to note that his aim was to offer a guideline for contemplative practice. The *Brulocht* thus arises as a true instrument that analyses and describes spiritual progression on a scriptural basis. In order to instruct his readers about mystical experience, Ruusbroec develops several literary strategies, such as a figurative and dynamic language and a set of metaphors intended to help the reader visualize his words, in particular his discourse about spiritual progression and the nature of union with God.⁶

The *Brulocht* illustrates particularly well how mystical texts were conceived and used as tools in meditative and contemplative practices. If religious texts can have this function, what about their visual equivalents, devotional images? Could these do the same? And does that function go beyond the 'contemplative immersion' (*kontemplatieve Versenkung*) ascribed to the *Andachtsbild* by Erwin Panofsky?⁷ And if so, what are the pictorial strategies used by the artists to make devotional images into such instruments? This article raises these questions by focusing on several early Netherlandish paintings that include devotional portraits. My aim is to demonstrate that there is a strong convergence between pictorial

³ On the structure of the *Brulocht*, see the introduction by Paul Mommaers in Ruusbroec, *Die geestelike brulocht* 15–34; and Warnar G., *Ruusbroec: Literature and Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden: 2007) 110–112.

⁴ Ruusbroec, *Die geestelike brulocht* D155 (l. 47), E154 (l. 40): 'Dese woorde wille wij dieden en ontbinden in drien manieren'.

⁵ Warnar, *Ruusbroec* 120.

⁶ On the literary strategies employed by Ruusbroec in the *Brulocht*, see *ibidem* 115–119.

⁷ According to Panofsky, the main function of devotional images is to immerse the viewer in the contemplation of Christ's sufferings. The power of these images thus lies in their ability to arouse an empathetic and emotional response; see Panofsky E., "*Imago Pietatis*. Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des 'Schmerzenmanns' und der 'Maria Mediatrix'", in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: 1927) 261–308.

and literary conventions related to devotional hermeneutics. Using the exegetical model of a transition from a literal reading to an anagogical one, the paintings discussed here incorporate pictorial devices that engage the viewer in a deep and complex 'reading', that is, in sustained interpretation of the formal structure and iconographical content of the pictures. Interpretative engagement requires him reflectively to dwell on the nature of what is depicted. I would thus suggest that such pictures, like mystical texts, offer spiritual spaces to be explored by the viewer seeking nourishment for his meditative practice; they are designed to incite prolonged consideration and to encourage sophisticated rumination. In this context, visual exegesis is defined as the interpretative experience that the image calls forth from the viewer. The interpretation is based not only on a series of visual devices, but also on complementary biblical metaphors that populate the spiritual literature. Many early Netherlandish religious paintings can be understood as exegetical instruments, or as an exegetical field, in the sense that they induce mental reflection on the status of what is represented to the eyes, namely, the union between man and God.

Complex Images: Visual Ambiguities in Early Netherlandish Painting

In 1487, Maarten van Nieuwenhove, a 23-year-old man from a wealthy Bruges family, commissioned from Hans Memling a painting that would become one of the most celebrated Flemish paintings of the fifteenth-century: the *Van Nieuwenhove Diptych*, now preserved at the Sint-Janshospitaal in Bruges [Fig. 1].⁸ Showing an encounter between the young man and the Virgin and her Child in a domestic setting, the diptych – more precisely its spatial construction – has aroused many comments.⁹ Like

⁸ The bibliography on this painting is huge. The reader will find an overview in Vos D. de, *Hans Memling: The Complete Oeuvre* (Antwerp: 1994), no. 78, and more recently in Lane B.G., *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (London – Turnhout: 2009), no. 14.

⁹ See De Vos D., "De constructie van Memlings Van Nieuwenhove-portret. Een problem van interpretatie van de voorbereidende tekening", *Oud Holland* 100 (1986) 165–170; De Vos, *Hans Memling* 279–282; Pearson A., *Envisioning Gender in Burgundian Devotional Art, 1350–1530: Experience, Authority, Resistance* (Aldershot: 2005) 85–86, 102–117, 125–127; Rothstein B.L., *Sight and Spirituality in Early Netherlandish Painting* (Cambridge: 2005) 125–127; Falkenburg R.L., "Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych: The Place of Prayer in Early Netherlandish Devotional Painting", in Hand J.O. – Spronk R. (eds.), *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych* (Cambridge – London – New Haven: 2006)



Fig. 1. Hans Memling, *The Van Nieuwenhove Diptych* (1487). Oil on wood, 44 × 33.5 cm. (each wing). Bruges, Sint-Janshospitaal (Memlingsmuseum), inv. no. O.SJ178.I. © Image: Lukas – Art in Flanders VZW.

many other portrait diptychs, Memling's painting was most probably destined for private devotion. Indeed, while a few of these paintings are documented as epitaphs or altarpieces,¹⁰ most of them were objects used in a private context and characterised by their portability. They could be hung on a wall in a private house, as can be seen on the right wing of the *Diptych of Christian de Hondt* by the Master of 1499, but they were also meant to be manipulated and moved about [Fig. 2].¹¹ In the *Van Nieuwenhove*

92–109; Hand J.O. – Metzger C.A. – Spronk R., *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp] (Washington – Antwerp – Cambridge – New Haven – London: 2006) 178–185 (with the results of the latest technical investigations on the painting); Savarese S. – Spronk R. – Stork D.G. – Pozo A. del, "Reflections on Praxis and Factice in a Devotional Portrait Diptych: A Computer Analysis of the Mirror in Hans Memling's *Virgin and Child and Maarten van Nieuwenhove*", in *Proceedings of SPIE (Computer Image Analysis in the Study of Art)* 6810 (2008) DOI: 10.1117/12.761226.

¹⁰ See for example the *Van der Velden Diptych* attributed to Adrien Isenbrant, which was placed in the family chapel in Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkerk in Bruges (left wing: Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, inv. no. 2592; right wing: Bruges, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkerk).

¹¹ A few pouches designed to store diptychs are still preserved, as is the case for the *Diptych Matheron* of Nicolas Froment, depicting René I, Duke of Anjou, and his wife, Jeanne



Fig. 2. Master of 1499, *The Diptych of Christian de Hondt*, left wing (1499). Oil on wood, 31 × 14.5 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 255–256. © Image: Lukas – Art in Flanders VZW.

Diptych, the backs of the panels were covered with a paint layer that simulates stone, indicating that the diptych was portable and meant to be seen both open or closed.¹² According to Falkenburg, the best way to apprehend the spatial construction of the diptych is to stand in front of the left panel, with the right wing orientated at 90 degrees.¹³

The left wing of the diptych represents the Virgin and Child in a frontal position, while the portrait of Maarten appears on the right wing. The protagonists are located behind a parapet covered with a rug, which is continuous across the two wings and gives a feeling of unity to the pictorial space, despite the separation created by the frames. This impression is reinforced by the fact that a piece of the Virgin's cloak seems to appear on the right wing, under the prayer book of Maarten. Nevertheless, a close look at this detail – and more precisely at the fold under the book – suggests that this piece of fabric does not form part of the Virgin's cloak, but is rather the cloth pouch used to protect and transport the book, as was common at the time.¹⁴ On the left wing, the image reflected in the mirror attests that the Virgin and the devotee are situated in the same physical space despite being located on two different panels [Fig. 3]. Indeed, one can see Mary seated on a bench and Maarten kneeling in profile at her side, in front of two large windows, which correspond to the frames. As Reindert Falkenburg has shown, these window frames create a connection between the pictorial space and that of the viewer, a connection that is strengthened by the fact that the cushion on which Christ is seated seems to extend beyond the pictorial plane, as suggested by the shadow underneath it.¹⁵

In addition to the painted reverses, the ambiguity of the spatial construction of the diptych strongly suggests that the object was destined to be manipulated by its owner: depending on the angle of opening, the

de Laval (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. RF 665). On this object, see Hand – Metzger – Spronk, *Prayers and Portraits* 82–83.

¹² Hand – Metzger – Spronk, *Prayers and Portraits* 292.

¹³ Falkenburg, "Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych" 96.

¹⁴ See, for example, Petrus Christus's *Portrait of a Young Man in Prayer* in the National Gallery, London (inv. no. NG 2593) or the right wing of the *Pagagnotti Triptych* by the Master of the Legend of St. Ursula (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 32.100.63), where the Virgin holds a book covered with such a fabric.

¹⁵ Falkenburg, "Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych" 96.



Fig. 3. Hans Memling, *The Van Nieuwenhove Diptych*, detail of the mirror. © Image: Lukas – Art in Flanders VZW.

impression of proximity increases or decreases and eye contact between the Virgin and the devotee varies. Furthermore, Maarten's position in the mirror is highly problematic: whereas he is represented in a three-quarters pose on the right wing, the reflection in the mirror shows him in profile. The true and the reflected images are thus in contradiction.¹⁶ By playing with the degree of openness of the diptych, it is possible to adjust the actual position of Maarten, making it match his image in the mirror, but then, the actual position of the windows (the frames) – and the perspective of the entire room – no longer correspond to the reflection in the mirror. Memling thus shows genuine compositional skill in the way he incorporates various formal ambiguities into the *Van Nieuwenhove Diptych*. Once this fact is established, we need to understand the meaning of these ambivalent effects.

The young man seems to have been strongly involved in the elaboration of his painting, as suggested by several changes made in the course of its execution. Indeed, the x-radiograph and infrared reflectography of the painting shows that several motifs were changed at a late stage of execution,¹⁷ suggesting that Memling modified a standardised composition in light of Maarten's comments and wishes.¹⁸ On the left wing, the painter had planned for a rectangular window similar to the other ones, later replacing it with the stained glass window depicting the motto and arms of Maarten. He probably revised the mirror at that stage. He also added the roundel depicting St George on the Virgin's right at a later stage. Furthermore, on the right wing, the piece of cloth under Maarten's prayer book was not part of the original drawing but was added at the coloring stage. One can see that the later additions and modifications are not without significance. On the contrary, they play an important role in conveying messages about the identity of the sitter and his devotional aspirations. There is no doubt that in commissioning the diptych, Maarten wanted to emphasize his social status,¹⁹ as suggested by the predominance of his motto and arms, as well as by the inscriptions and

¹⁶ Falkenburg calls attention to this ambiguity in "Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych" 96 and note 4. On the paradox of the reflected image in the mirror, see also Rothstein, *Sight and Spirituality* 85–87.

¹⁷ For a complete analysis of these documents, see Hand – Metzger – Spronk, *Prayers and Portraits* 292–293.

¹⁸ Ibidem 182.

¹⁹ The social function of devotional portrait diptychs is well analysed in Wilson J.C., *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages: Studies in Society and Visual Culture* (Pasadena: 1998) 41–84.

some other modifications.²⁰ Nevertheless, we cannot follow Jean C. Wilson when she affirms that 'it is difficult to imagine [...] how a patron's private devotional practices would have been facilitated by contemplating his or her own image along with those of the Virgin and Child or other religious figures. In this context, the portrait wing could only provide a form of visual distraction from the sacred subjects that were more appropriately associated with devotional meditation or prayer'.²¹ Indeed, in the particular case of Maarten's diptych, the modification of the window (and then of the mirror), the book, and the piece of cloth under it contradicts Wilson's assumption: Maarten surely wanted to possess a work of art with his portrait that also met his devotional expectations.

Furthermore, these subtleties of representation reinforce the idea that the painting was conceived as a devotional tool: more than simply toying with the perception of space, Memling utilizes compositional complexity to raise fundamental questions not only about the spatial construction and thus the nature of the space depicted, but also about the relationship between the Virgin and the devotee. Does the sitter really see the Virgin, and does she pay attention to him in return? Are they really located in the same space? These and other questions invite the viewer to ponder the status of the pictorial representation he is closely attending, and to interpret its visual ambiguities, which, as we shall see, play a crucial role in the devotional hermeneutic of such images.²² More precisely, the viewer is led to consider the space depicted as the fusion of two different spaces, or two separate worlds: that of the Virgin and that of Maarten, symbolised by the two panels.

Such devices, which introduce a kind of ambiguity into the depicted meeting with the divine, are quite frequent in early Netherlandish paintings that include devotional portraits. Hans Memling and his patrons seem to have been fond of these kinds of visual games. We find a similar (though less complex) contradiction between the position of the devotee and the

²⁰ His motto – 'IL YA CAVSE' – appears on the painted glass window of the left wing, as well as in the four roundels that allude to his name. The lower part of the frames bears the inscription 'HOC · OPVS · FIERI · FECIT · MARTINVS · D^e · NEWENHOVEN · ANNO · DM · 1487 · AN^o · VERO · ETATIS · SVE · : 23 · : · ' followed by a little dragon whose meaning is unknown.

²¹ Wilson, *Painting in Bruges* 58.

²² On the importance visual skills in devotional practices, see Rothstein, *Sight and Spirituality*, as well as his contribution in the present volume.



Fig. 4 (*on this page*). Hans Memling, *Triptych of Benedetto Portinari* (1487) (left wing and central panel). Oil on wood, 45.5 × 34.5 cm. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv. no. 1100 (left wing) and 41.5 × 31.5 cm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemaldegalerie, inv. no. 528B (central panel);

(*on p. 371*). Hans Memling, *Triptych of Benedetto Portinari* (1487) (right wing). Oil on wood, 45 × 34 cm. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv. no. 1090.

Images © Photo SCALA Image (wings) and bpk, Berlin (central panel).



architectural structure in the *Triptych of Benedetto Portinari* [Fig. 4].²³ Depicted in half-length, the Virgin appears on the central panel, flanked by Benedetto Portinari on the right and by his patron saint, Benedict, on the left. They are located in a loggia, with a bucolic landscape behind them. At first sight, the composition seems unified across the three panels, but several details are confusing. For instance, there is the intriguing

²³ On this painting, see De Vos, *Hans Memling*, no. 79, and Lane, *Hans Memling*, no. 23 (both with bibliography).



Fig. 5a. Hans Memling, "Virgin and Child with Angels", from *Diptych of the Virgin with the Rosebush* (ca. 1490). Oil on wood, 43.3 × 31.1 cm. (each wing). Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 680-1401. Image © bpk, Berlin.



Fig. 5b. Hans Memling, “Portrait of the Donor”, from *Diptych of the Virgin with the Rosebush* (ca. 1490). Oil on wood, 43.3 × 31.1 cm. (each wing). Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 680–1401. Image © bpk, Berlin.

fact that Benedetto's book and Mary's right elbow seem to be cropped by the central frame. Nevertheless, it also appears that the columns – which correspond to the uprights of the frame – are what actually conceal the book and elbow. Other more calculated strategies bring a certain ambiguity to the representation: if the uprights of the frame correspond to the columns standing on the parapet in the foreground, Benedetto's position in three-quarter view, with his left elbow poised on the parapet, implies that he cannot see the Virgin and Child. As in the *Van Nieuwenhove Diptych*, the triptych can be angled open to solve the problem, but only partially, since the architecture then becomes inconsistent. Finally, the regular file of the arcade behind the figures seems to be interrupted: a pillar should appear on the right edge of the left panel, as is the case on the right wing.

Another picture by Memling, the *Diptych of the Virgin with the Rosebush* at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, also presents this kind of visual ambiguity [Fig. 5].²⁴ While the landscape in which the figures are located is unified across the two panels, and the rosebush in the left wing continues into the right wing, part of the musician angel situated on the right is cut off by the upright of the frame, as also is the sitter's hat. However, the entire adoration scene is reflected in St. George's armour, on which the viewer can distinguish the Virgin, the angels on the left, and the back of the devotee. By means of this reflection, the painter insists on the actual presence of the Madonna and Child in front of the praying man. This element is crucial, as it allows us to contradict Craig Harbison's theory that the integration of devotional portraits into a religious scene does not mean that the devotees are in the true presence of the sacred persons, but rather that they are experiencing a mental vision of them.²⁵ A detail such as the reflection on the armour in Memling's diptych implies a more subtle understanding of the picture.²⁶ On a more general level, ambiguities of the sort described here do not suggest the unreal nature of the meeting between man and God. Instead, leading the viewer to go beyond

²⁴ On this painting, see De Vos, *Hans Memling*, no. 87; and Lane, *Hans Memling*, no. B9 (both with bibliography).

²⁵ Harbison C., "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting", *Simiolus* 15 (1985) 87–118.

²⁶ For instance, Bret Rothstein, *Sight and Spirituality* 51–91, suggests that Van der Paele's disconnected gaze suggests the 'profundity of [his] spiritual state', his 'pure meditation' detached from sensible world, which is underscored by the fact that the Virgin and the saints are really standing next to him.

the apparently obvious content of the image, they turn images into instruments requiring close observation and analysis. Such details must be deciphered and interpreted by the viewer, who is led to meditate deeply on the status of mystical union, the core of the spiritual experience. In order to have a better view of the way the encounter with God was conceived in the later Middle Ages, we need to turn to the late medieval mystical treatises, which share the same ‘community of discourse’ as these images.²⁷ Jan van Ruusbroec’s writings are helpful here, as they shed new light on the ways in which the encounter with the divine was staged in early Netherlandish paintings including devotional portraits. Before coming back to the images, however, it is now necessary to make a detour into the texts.

Complex Matters: Spiritual Perfection and Union with God
by Jan van Ruusbroec

A large part of Jan van Ruusbroec’s writings is dedicated to mystical union or, to be precise, to the different ways in which the soul can be united with God. According to the mystic, the unitive experience is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon.²⁸ Medieval theologians and mystics traditionally make use of a tripartite division – mostly inherited from Bonaventura’s *De triplici via* – to describe spiritual progression. At first sight, this division invites us to consider the mystical experience as a linear and upward succession of several steps, from the sensible world to the heights of contemplation, the summit of the mystical state. However, this tripartite division is first and foremost a convenient way of structuring the discourse on a central, but complex, aspect of religious inner life.²⁹ As Ruusbroec explains in *Vanden blinkenden steen (On the Sparkling Stone)*, the reality of the totally fulfilled mystic is quite different, since the mystic considers spiritual perfection as a composite and additional state:

A man who wants to live in the most perfect state offered by holy Church must be a zealous and good man, and an inward and spiritual man, and an uplifted man contemplating God, and an outflowing, common man. If

²⁷ I would like to thank Geert Warnar for discussing this idea with me.

²⁸ On unitive experience, see Mommaers’ introduction in Ruusbroec, *Die geestelike brulocht* 15.

²⁹ For an introduction to these questions, see Blommensteijn H., “Progrès-progressants”, in Viller M. – Derville A. – Lamarche P. – Solignac A. (eds.), *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique. Doctrine et histoire*, tome 12, vol. 1 (Paris: 1986), cols. 2383–2405.

a man combines these four things, his state is perfect and it will grow and increase always in grace and all virtues and knowledge of truth before God and all men of reason.³⁰

In this passage, the reader finds an allusion to the three traditional stages (purgative, illuminative, unitive) of spiritual progression: 'zealous and good man' (*earnstachtich goet mensche*) corresponds to the first step, 'inward and spiritual man' (*innich gheestelijc mensche*) to the second and 'uplifted man contemplating God' (*verhavent god scouwende mensche*) to the third. Nonetheless, a fundamental difference lies in the fact that according to Ruusbroec, the perfect man must *combine* these three states, as the recurrent use of 'and' in this passage ably demonstrated. It implies that the true spiritual evolution is not a succession of several steps, but a constant enrichment of the man involved in this process. Another striking aspect of this passage is that the three first states are completed by a fourth one: the man must also be 'an outflowing, common man' (*een uytvloende ghemeine mensche*). With this notion, we are confronted with a key aspect of Ruusbroec's discourse.³¹ Indeed, Ruusbroec develops the concept of 'common life' (*ghemeine leven*) in several of his works in order to describe spiritual perfection. Being a common man crowns the three traditional stages of spiritual progression and leads one to consider worldly and spiritual realities in a brand new light. More precisely, the *ghemeine leven* allows man to live in an active and contemplative manner, to work (*werken*) and to enjoy (*gebruken*) at the same time.

The concept of *ghemeine leven* is based on *John* 10:9: 'I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture'. Ruusbroec characterises the common man by using the terms 'going in' (*in gaen* – which refers to contemplative life and enjoyment) and 'going out' (*ute gaen* – which refers to active life and work).

³⁰ Ruusbroec J. van, *Vanden blinkenden steen. Vanden vier becoringhen. Vanden kerstenen ghelove. Brieven/Letters. Opera Omnia* 10, ed. G. de Baere – T. Mertens – H. Noë – trans. A. Lefèvre (Tielt – Turnhout: 1991), D101 (l. 1–7), E100 (l. 1–5): 'Die mensche die leven wilt inden volcommensten state der heiligher kerken, hi moet sijn een ernstachtich goet mensche ende een innich gheestelijc mensche ende een verhavent god scouwende mensche ende een uytvloende gheme[e]yne mensche. Also dese viere dinghe vergaderen in eenen mensche, dan es sinen state volcomen, ende altoes wassende ende toenemende in meer gracen ende in allen doechden ende in kinnessen der waerheit vore gode ende vore alle redelijcke mensche'.

³¹ On this concept, see Fraling B., *Mystik und Geschichte. Das "ghemeyne leven" in der Lehre des Jan van Ruusbroecs* (Regensburg: 1974); De Baere G., "Het Ghemeine leven bij Ruusbroec en Geert Grote Geert", *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 59, 2–3 (1985) 172–183; and Warnar, *Ruusbroec* 167–171.

According to Ruusbroec, the apogee of the contemplative process is thus bipolar: activity alternates with rest in God in order to create a perpetual cycle, which is the blossoming of the spiritually perfect man, in other words the common man. This alternation between *work* and *rest* is clearly expressed in a passage of the *Espousals*:

For no one can enter into rest above activity unless he has first yearningly and actively loved. Therefore, the grace of God and our active love must precede and follow, that is, they must be practiced before and afterwards. For without the works of love, we can neither merit nor attain God, nor preserve what we have obtained through the works of love.³²

This passage is fundamental, for it illustrates the complex dynamic of spiritual perfection as Ruusbroec conceived it. For him, attaining spiritual perfection means that resting in God and being active succeed each other. Eventually, the outcome of the contemplative process – the *ghemeine leven* – is a perpetually cyclical dynamic and not the end of a linear progression. After having attained the heights of contemplation, one must come back into the world that is then experienced in a new, transcendent way, before the cycle starts again.

The complexity of Ruusbroec's thought is also expressed in his discourse on the nature of union with God. In the *Boecksken der verclaringhen* (*The Booklet of Clarification*), a book he wrote on request for the Carthusians of Herne, who had questions about his previous works,³³ Ruusbroec states that the soul can be united with God in three ways (with intermediary, without intermediary, and without distinction) that constitute three complementary aspects of the mystical experience, and not three successive moments.³⁴ The third type of union, without distinction (*sonder differentie*), is the most difficult to attain. At this level of spiritual perfection, the soul experiences a supra-essential union and rests eternally in God, becoming one spirit with him. Nevertheless, for Ruusbroec, being one

³² Ruusbroec, *Die geestelike brulocht*, D533 (l. b2232–2237), E532 (l. b1922–1926): ‘Want niemen en mach comen in rasten boven werc, hi en hebbe vore begherlijcke ende werkelijcke ghemint. Ende hier omme moet de gracie gods ende onse werkelijcke mine vore gaen ende na comen, dat es dat si gheofent moet sijn vore ende na. Want sonder mine werken en moghen wij niet verdienen noch gode vercrichen, noch dat selve behouden dat wij overmids minne werke vercreghen hebben’.

³³ On the context of this book, see Mommaers' introduction in Ruusbroec J. van, *Boecksken der verclaringhe. Opera Omnia* 1, ed. G. de Baere – trans. P. Crowley – H. Rolfson (Tielt – Turnhout: 1981); and Warnar, *Ruusbroec* 272–278.

³⁴ On the three modes of union, see Mommaers' introduction in Ruusbroec, *Boecksken der verclaringhe* 32–33.

spirit with God does not mean that man loses his human nature. For him, a clear distinction will always exist between God and man (who retains his human nature), as he states at the beginning of his book:

I have further stated that no creature can become or be so holy that it loses its own condition of creature and becomes God, not even the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ: it will remain eternally creature and other than God. Nevertheless, we must all be lifted up above ourselves in God and be one spirit with God in love if we would be blessed.³⁵

Conceived in this manner, the union between God and man appears as an intimate relationship between two distinct entities and two different spheres, which occurs at several levels of human experience. A man able to attain union on each of these levels gains spiritual perfection:

Christ's prayer is fulfilled in those united to God in the threefold manner. With God they will ebb and flow, and [will] always be in repose, in possessing and enjoying. They will work and endure and rest in the superessence without fear. They will go out and in and find nourishment both within and without. They are drunk with love and have passed away into God in a dark luminosity.³⁶

This final passage of the *Boecksen der verclaringhen* confirms that for Ruusbroec, the mystical process does not consist of a succession of steps leading towards an apogee that would be the union with God. Instead, it is closer to an inner enrichment, which allows man to be united with God 'in a threefold manner' (*drivoldegheer wijs*) and to become a common man. Furthermore, thanks to this concept of *ghemeine leven*, Jan van Ruusbroec offers a more balanced version of the devotional ideal, one that is more adapted to the reality of his time. Indeed, by affirming that the active and the contemplative lives can be reconciled and must be combined, Ruusbroec's goal is to offer a spiritual ideal that suits not only confirmed religious, but also lay people. In doing so, he gives them a framework in

³⁵ Ruusbroec, *Boecksen der verclaringhe*, D111 (l. 37–42), E110 (l. 31–37): 'Ic hebbe voert gheseghet dat en ghene creature en mach soe heilech werden noch sijn, dat si hare gheschapenheit verliese ende god werde, noch oech die ziele ons heren Jhesu Cristi: die sal eweleke creature bliven ende een ander van gode. Nochtan moete wi alle boven ons selven in gode verhaven sijn ende een geest met gode in minnen, sele wi salech sijn'.

³⁶ Ruusbroec, *Boecksen der verclaringhe*, D153 (l. 503–508), E152 (l. 437–441): 'Die aldus met gode gheenecht sijn drivoldegheer wijs, in hen es Cristus bede volbracht. Si selen met gode ebben ende vloien, ende altoes in besittene ende in ghebrukene ledech staen. Se selen werken ende ghedoeghen, ende in overwesene rusten sonder vaer. Se selen ute gaen ende in gaen, ende spise venden hier ende daer. Si sijn van minnen droncken ende in gode ontslaepen in .i. doncker clear'.

which they can continue to live in the world, while trying to attain spiritual perfection.³⁷

*Depicting Union with God and Spiritual Perfection:
Towards a Reassessment of Visual Ambiguities*

In the light of Ruusbroec’s discourse on spiritual perfection and mystical union – a discourse he shares in many respects with other mystical and devotional authors of his time³⁸ – one can consider the formal complexity and the visual ambiguities of many early Netherlandish devotional paintings from a new angle. These ambivalences do not suggest an insurmountable distance between two levels of reality, namely the sacred and the worldly. Instead, they appear as a pictorial means of showing how subtle is the encounter between God and man. From this point of view, the most significant element is the structure of the pictorial space – more precisely, the way two spaces of a different nature are portrayed together in the pictures. For example, in the *Van Nieuwenhove Diptych*, the Virgin and the young man are located in the same space but, as we have seen, that space is not completely uniform. The compositional structure of the diptych, the frames, the reflections, the apparent end-piece of Mary’s cloak in the devotee’s panel are motives indicating to the viewer that the pictorial space must be understood as an interpenetration of two distinct worlds. Such a representation has parallels with Ruusbroec’s conception of union with God and specifically with the idea that even though perfectly united to God, man keeps his human nature: Maarten and the Virgin are next to each other, in a place where their two universes merge, but thanks to the pictorial ambiguities, the viewer understands that this merging is not total.³⁹ The protagonists are united as perfectly as possible, but each

³⁷ See Warnar, *Ruusbroec* 168–169.

³⁸ Geert Grote, the founder of the Modern Devotion, notably borrows from Ruusbroec the concept of *ghemeine leven*, which he uses in his *Tractatus de quattuor generibus meditabilium*, generally dated around 1382–1383. This idea of combining the active and the contemplative lives goes back to Gregory the Great, on which see McGinn B., *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century*, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* 2 (New York: 1994) 74–79. Amongst Ruusbroec’s contemporaries, this idea can also be found in the works of Jean Gerson and Meister Eckhart.

³⁹ A similar bridging’ of earthly and celestial spaces in Jan van Eyck’s *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* is discussed in Rothstein, *Sight and Spirituality* 97–98; Rothstein construes the loggia where Rolin and the Virgin and Child are located as an ‘indeterminate locus in which worldly and spiritual interests may be reconciled most fully’.



Fig. 6. [COL.PL.15] Jan Provost, *The Vander Burch Triptych* (1497–1501/2). Oil on wood, 46.3 × 37.2 cm. (central panel), 46.3 × 15.5 cm. (wings). Private collection. Image © Ingrid Falque.

of them keeps his or her own characteristics. In other words, man never becomes God.

This interpretation of the visual ambiguities in Maarten's diptych finds parallels in the other works mentioned previously. Nevertheless, the best example of devices designed to catch the eyes of an attentive viewer and to induce deep reflection on the contemplative process and the interpenetration of the earthly and the sacred, is to be found in another painting, namely Jan Provost's *Van der Burch Triptych* [Fig. 6]. Preserved in a private collection, this triptych has been dated around 1497–1501/2 by Catheline Perier D'Ieteren.⁴⁰ As the coats of arms depicted on the window of the left wing indicate, the triptych was commissioned by Pieter van der Burch and his wife, who were citizens of Bruges.⁴¹ Its small dimensions (46 cm. high,

⁴⁰ Perier D'Ieteren C., "Une œuvre inédite de Jean Provost. Le triptyque Van der Burch et ses rapports avec le diptyque du Fogg Museum", *Revue de l'art* 67 (1985) 66–76.

⁴¹ The coat of arms on the left belongs to the Van der Burch family, and the one on the right corresponds to the Ghislille family, here parted with the Van der Burch arms. As observed in *ibidem* 71, this coat of arms was painted over, probably after the triptych Ghislille family inherited the triptych.

68 cm. wide) suggest that the picture was destined for private use, perhaps in the couple's home.

The central panel of the triptych depicts Saint Anne and the Virgin seated, books on their laps, in the loggia of an urban residence. Between them stands the Child, playing with the pages of his grandmother's book while she gives him a carnation, symbol of his future death on the cross. Located in the same space as these three figures, Pieter van der Burch and his wife appear in prayer. Behind this scene, one can see the inner courtyard of the house, an enclosed garden, and behind the surrounding walls, a town identified as Bruges by the belfry. As often occurs in triptychs with devotional portraits, the couple appear on the wings and are thus physically separated from the sacred personae by the frames, even though the pictorial space is apparently unified. Nevertheless, in spite of the frames acting as a separation, husband and wife are partly integrated into the sacred space, since their hands clasped in prayer and their *prie-dieus* are not painted on the wings but on the central panel.⁴² As we shall see, thanks to the unification of the pictorial space across the three panels and this intrusion of the devotee into the space of the sacred personae, the *Van der Burch Triptych* offers the viewer a perfect illustration of the outcome of spiritual progression. If the pictorial devices used by Provost differ from those of Memling, the result is the same: showing the viewer the moment of perfect union of the soul with God. Further devices are used in this painting in order to endow the representation with another meaning that could be related to the concept of *ghemeine leven*.

According to the traditional symbolism of the late Middle Ages, the house and the enclosed garden are metaphors for the soul, which is considered to be the place where union with God occurs.⁴³ The devotional literature of the time often makes use of these images of the soul as a

⁴² This intrusion into the central panel of the devotees depicted on the wings constitutes a unique and exceptional case in the corpus of early Netherlandish paintings including devotional portraits.

⁴³ See Ohly F., "*Cor Amantis non augustum*. Vom Wohnen im Herzen", in idem (ed.), *Schriften zur mittelalterlichen Bedeutungsforschung* (Darmstadt: 1977) 125–155; Falkenburg R.L., *The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450–1550* (Amsterdam: 1994); Hamburger J.F., *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 1997) 151–175; and Falkenburg R.L., "The Household of the Soul: Conformity in the Merode Triptych", in Ainsworth M.W. (ed.), *Early Netherlandish Painting at the Crossroads: A Critical Look at Current Methodologies* (New York: 2001) 2–17.

garden that one must embellish by planting flowers and as a house that must be decorated in order to welcome the Lord, the flowers or furniture being symbols of virtues. As Reindert Falkenburg and Jeffrey Hamburger have shown, these metaphors also find visual expression in the paintings and miniatures of the time. In early Netherlandish painting in particular, it is very common to see people portrayed in prayer within an enclosed garden or a domestic setting, as attested by Memling's diptych discussed above. Likewise, it frequently occurs that the sacred place is located in the foreground of the picture, whereas the background is occupied by the secular world, as symbolised by a city or a rural landscape.⁴⁴ These two opposite spaces are often linked to each other through a pathway, a fence, or an open gate that represents – and then emphasises – the path taken by the devotee from the earthly world in the background to the sacred sphere in the foreground, where he can meet Christ. The device of the open door is more that a means to suggest the movement of the devotee: it can also be linked to the biblical metaphor from the *Gospel of John*, evoked earlier ('I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture'); it then implies a possible movement back and forth – or 'a coming in and going out' – between these two spheres that symbolise action and contemplation.

The *Van der Burch Triptych* is typical of this representational system. In the foreground, the sacred space, alluding to contemplation, consists of the loggia in which all the figures are located. It also includes the courtyard with the enclosed garden. The high wall at the back of the courtyard separates this quiet, sacred space from the secular world, the sphere of activity, which is depicted as the town of Bruges in the background. Nonetheless, this wall is pierced by a wide open door that creates a permanent passage between the two spheres, between action and contemplation. Obviously, the location of this open door right in the middle of the central panel, in the continuation of St Anne's hand giving the Child a carnation, is not accidental. In this painting, not only are the sacred and the secular spaces juxtaposed, but their junction is underlined by means of the open

⁴⁴ For a more complete discussion of these questions, see Falque, *Portraits de dévots*, and eadem, "Mise en mots et mise en image de la progression spirituelle. Vers une nouvelle approche du portrait dévotionnel dans la peinture flamande de la fin du Moyen Âge", in Dekoninck R. – Granjon E. – Guiderdoni A. (eds.), *Fiction sacrée. Esthétique et spiritualité au début de la période moderne / Sacred Fiction: Aesthetics and Spirituality in the Early Modern Period* (Leuven: forthcoming) 289–317, where I argue that many paintings including devotional portraits can be understood as visualisations, as 'mises en image', of the spiritual process experienced by the people portrayed.

door and the path in the courtyard. This shows to the viewer not only the spiritual progression of the couple portrayed, but also their capacity to lead a mixed and spiritually perfect life, combining action and contemplation, activity and rest. Such devices visually suggest that the people portrayed are involved in a spiritual process: they began their itinerary in the earthly world, then rose towards union with God and became spiritually perfect – they are *common*, to recall Ruusbroec’s terminology – and they can now go back to the world, which having transcended, they can also experience in a new way.

As shown before, pictorial devices such as gates, fences, and open doors that emphasize the passage between action and contemplation are quite frequent in the corpus of early Netherlandish paintings that include devotional portraits. Nevertheless, in the precise case of the *Van der Burch Triptych*, they occupy a more predominant position and are very subtly deployed: in the foreground, following a horizontal axis, the world of the devotees and that of the sacred persons interpenetrate; the unified pictorial space indicates their merger, as also does the intrusion of the devotees’ hands into the central panel, these devices serving to allude to the best possible union between their sphere and the divine one. A second significant axis, vertical this time, appears if we take into account the depth of the image, its central point being the open door that links the two spaces and visually expresses the devotee’s ability to be both in the world and in contemplation.⁴⁵

Works of art such as the *Van Nieuwenhove Diptych* and the *Van der Burch Triptych* can be understood as visualizations of, and visual commentaries on, the complexity of spiritual perfection and union with God, experienced not as the result of a linear progression but as a cyclical process: being united with God and attaining spiritual perfection do not mean that one loses one’s human nature, or that one must live indefinitely outside of the world. Spiritual experience accommodates experience of the world in a completely new way, for it allows the votary to acquire a deeper and transcendental knowledge of it. Just as spiritual texts describe the relation between the active and contemplative lives in complex and subtle words, so devotional images express this relation by means of pictorial devices, visual ambiguities, and subtle artifices. Such pictorial ambiguities have regularly been underestimated by art histori-

⁴⁵ For a similar consideration of the spiritual implications of the visual axes in Jan van Eyck’s *Virgin and Child in a Church*, see Rothstein, *Sight and Spirituality* 77–82.

ans, even though they undoubtedly played a significant role in the devotional hermeneutic of many paintings. Furthermore, they provide us with precious information about how such images were conceived, used, and interpreted as devotional tools: they were closely watched, scrutinized, manipulated; they were open to a wide field of spiritual interpretation. As the French historian of images, Jérôme Baschet, states in his very stimulating book on medieval iconography, 'the analysis of the pious use of the image presupposes less an establishing of its meaning than showing how it dupes its viewer, how it slips away in order to take him towards an infinite quest. The aim is not so much to solve the enigma of images, but to think through the mystery and the fascination as an integral part of their functioning'.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Baschet J., *L'iconographie médiévale* (Paris: 2008) 176–177: 'L'analyse des usages dévots de l'image suppose moins d'en établir le sens que de montrer comment celui-ci se joue de son spectateur, se dérobe pour mieux l'entraîner dans une quête infinie. Il ne s'agit pas tant de résoudre l'énigme des images que de penser le mystère et la fascination comme part intégrante de leur fonctionnement'. The English translation is mine.

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ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN AND JAN VAN RUUSBROEC:
READING, RENDING, AND RE-FASHIONING THE 'TWICE-DYED'
VEIL OF BLOOD IN THE ESCORIAL *CRUCIFIXION*

Elliott D. Wise

The great Brabantine mystic and exegete, Jan van Ruusbroec (1293–1381), is well known for his prolific contribution to Middle Dutch spiritual literature. Particularly popular among reform-minded groups within the Church, Ruusbroec exerted a pronounced influence on the Carthusians as well as on progressive lay organizations like the *Gottesfreunde* and the *Devotio moderna*. Although writing for an audience largely literate in Latin, Ruusbroec chose to expound intricate theology in the untried lexicon of the vernacular, frequently punctuating his prose with highly visual analogies and colorful rhetorical flourishes. His description of divine vision and his vivid explication of Scripture resonate closely with the imagery employed by early Netherlandish panel painters, many of whom explored the same devotional themes that occupy the heart of his corpus of work – tailoring the soul to align with Christ, using images to commune with the incarnate ‘image’ of God’s son, and seeking mystical unification with the Father by invoking the Eucharistic mediation of Christ.

This essay is part of a larger investigation into Ruusbroec’s role in shaping and embellishing the vibrant, visual exegesis of two of the most innovative artists of the northern Renaissance, Rogier van der Weyden (ca. 1399–1464) and Robert Campin (ca. 1378–1444). Up to this point, Ruusbroec’s potential to illuminate the erudition and pathos of Netherlandish devotional art has been largely untapped. In recent years, a few art historians have made use of his texts to great effect, but they have

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concentrated almost exclusively on his most well-known work, *The Spiritual Espousals* (*Die geestelike brulocht*).¹ This essay, by contrast, will draw from Ruusbroec's massive typological treatise, *On the Spiritual Tabernacle* (*Van den geesteliken tabernakel*), as well as from his shorter distillation on Eucharistic devotion, *A Mirror of Eternal Blessedness* (*Een spiegel der eeuwighe salicheit*). In the pages that follow, I will explore the deepened meaning that these texts bring to Rogier's Escorial *Crucifixion*, an unusually well-documented painting that provides important historical evidence connecting Rogier and Ruusbroec via two Carthusian foundations in the environs of Brussels [Fig. 1].

Ruusbroec came to Brussels as a child, and after being ordained to the priesthood in 1318, he served for twenty-five years as a chaplain at the Collegiate Church of St. Gudula. He subsequently retired to the woods surrounding the city to found a hermitage at Groenendaal, where in 1350 Ruusbroec and his followers became Augustinian canons. In total, he spent nearly four decades secluded in this forest monastery, writing treatises until his death at almost ninety years of age. Significantly, Ruusbroec's readership escalated during the fifteenth century, when Rogier was working as city painter of Brussels and living just a few hours' walk from Groenendaal.² Rogier likely encountered the words and legacy of the mystic in a multitude of places, perhaps including the Church of Saint-Jacques sur Coudenberg, a foundation which, like Groenendaal Monastery, was administered by local Augustinian canons.³ Rogier and his wife

¹ Colin E., "Review", *The Art Bulletin* 68 (December 1986) 676–679. Eisler was one of the first to point out Ruusbroec's relevance to the visual arts. For more recent publications referring to Ruusbroec, see Rothstein B., *Sight and Spirituality in Early Netherlandish Painting* (New York: 2005), esp. the introduction, chapters 1, 2; Decker J.R., *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Farnham, England – Burlington, Vermont: 2009), esp. 53–54, 110–111, 127–128, 136; Bekaert E., "The Mystical Dimension in Flemish Primitive Painting: Exploring the Spiritual Affinity between John of Ruusbroec and Rogier van der Weyden", *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 82 (December 2011) 333–392.

² There is a marked increase in copies of Ruusbroec's work after 1450. See: Warnar G., *Ruusbroec: Literature and Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. D. Webb, in Vanderjagt A.J. (ed.), *Brill's Studies in Intellectual History*, Vol. 150 (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 197; and Mertens T., "Introduction", in Ruusbroec J. van, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel*, ed. T. Mertens, trans. H. Rolfson, in Baere G. de (ed.), *Jan van Ruusbroec Opera Omnia*, 5–6, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 2 vols (Turnhout: 2006) I 69.

³ Fifteenth-century archives from Saint-Jacques cite Groenendaal Monastery several times, often in connection to questions of land and property. See Derveeghe D. van (ed.), *Inventaire analytique des archives ecclésiastiques du Brabant*, Vol. 2, *Inventaire des archives de Saint-Jacques sur Coudenberg. 1^{re} partie. Inventaire analytique des chartes (1190–1756)* (Brussels: 1962), inventory numbers 579, 593, 599, 682, 752, 925, 927, 1018, 1170, 1172. Bekaert, "Mystical Dimension in Flemish Primitive Painting" 356–357, suggests other possible inter-

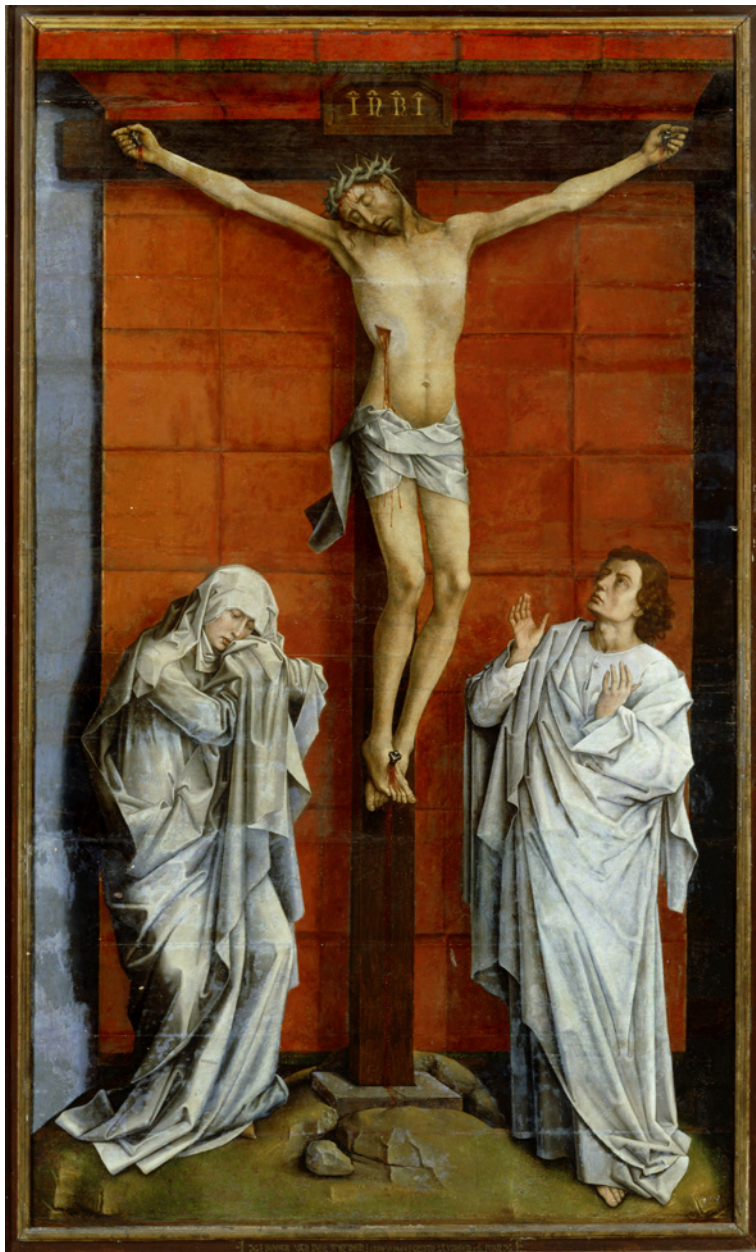


Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 16] Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion*, painted for the Charterhouse of Our Lady of Grace at Scheut, near Brussels (ca. 1456). Oil on panel, 325 × 192 cm. Madrid, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, El Escorial. Image © Art Resource, New York, NY.

appear on the 1462 records of Saint-Jacques' prestigious Confraternity of the Holy Cross, and the couple arranged for the church to offer posthumous masses for their souls.⁴

The most intriguing connection between Rogier and Ruusbroec, however, comes through the Carthusian Charterhouse at Herne. Ruusbroec visited this monastery to deliver a lecture at the invitation of Brother Gerard of Saintes, who edited and wrote a prologue for the mystic's work and contributed to his exoneration from accusations of unorthodoxy leveled by the powerful prelate, Jean Gerson.⁵ Early copies of Ruusbroec's texts would have still held a prominent place in the Herne library when, in 1449, Rogier's son, Cornelis, entered the historic charterhouse as a novice. Rogier's oeuvre indicates that the artist had a longtime interest in Carthusian spirituality and patronage, doubtlessly amplified by this personal connection to Herne. In fact, Rogier gave money to his son's monastery, polychromed a statue of St. Catherine, and offered a panel painting for the chapel.⁶ When, in 1456, the city of Brussels established another local Carthusian foundation at Scheut, Rogier and his wife donated money to the new Charterhouse of Our Lady of Grace and requested that the monks offer mass for their souls each year on the feast of St. John the Baptist.⁷ Around

sections between Rogier and Ruusbroec, the most interesting of which being a document asserting that Groenendaal possessed a painting by Rogier until the eighteenth century.

⁴ See Campbell L., "Rogier van der Weyden and Tapestry", in Campbell L. – Stock J. van der (eds.), *Rogier van der Weyden 1400–1464: Master of Passions* (Zwolle – Leuven: 2009) 238. For more information on Rogier's association with Saint-Jacques sur Coudenberg, including memorial masses for his wife and him, see Derveeghde (ed.), *Inventaire analytique*, inventory numbers 1145, 1232, 1240, 1241.

⁵ Some of Gerson's main qualms with Ruusbroec included his use of the vernacular and his belief in unification with God 'without distinction', on which see Warnar, *Ruusbroec* 9, 278, 283. Brother Gerard encouraged Ruusbroec to write his *Booklet of Clarification* to explain these types of theological concepts that could be too easily misunderstood. See: ibidem 129, 274; and Mertens, "Introduction", in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* I 65, 67, 69, 70.

⁶ See Jolly P.H., "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions* and Their Relation to Fra Angelico at San Marco", *Oud Holland* 95 (1981) 119; and Bekaert, "Mystical Dimension in Flemish Primitive Painting" 348–351. Both Jolly and Bekaert believe that the painting offered to the Herne chapel was likely Rogier's Philadelphia *Crucifixion*.

⁷ See Zuidema L., *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding: Een onderzoek naar de functie van kunst in Nederlandse karmelietenkloosters 1450–1550* (Ph.D. dissertation, Universiteit Leiden: 2010) 163; and Jolly, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions*" 119, with citation from the Scheut *Obituary*: 'Anniversarium magistri Rogerii de Pascua, pictoris, ac consortis ejus, dedit semel tam in pecuniis quam picturis valoris circa xx libras grotas Brabantiae'.

1456, Rogier presented his Escorial *Crucifixion* to Scheut.⁸ The brothers at Scheut were likely well versed in Ruusbroec's writings since their first monks, their first prior, and possibly even their first books were imported from Herne.⁹ The painting seems to have been a personal gift from Rogier, specially crafted to enhance the Carthusian spiritual tradition embraced by his son, a tradition of rigorous and austere devotion to the Passion.¹⁰

The Escorial *Crucifixion* was certainly an austere painting when it was created, but its current severity has been heightened by damage to the panel, loss of paint, and over-zealous restoration.¹¹ An over-life-sized image of Christ hangs from the cross, flanked by the sorrowing Virgin and St. John, whose ethereal white robes echo the pale body of the Lord and likely make reference to Carthusians habits.¹² Backed by a stone wall and the crisp creases of a newly-unfolded red curtain, the figures appear to have been lifted from the hill of Calvary and the narrative of the Gospels and reassembled as the focus of a timeless and 'transhistorical' devotion in the dark, Gothic chapel of Our Lady of Grace.¹³ And yet this

⁸ There are several hypotheses for the date of the Escorial panel. Panofsky posited a date as late as 1462, in Panofsky E., *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: 1953) I 288. Jolly, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions*" 113–126, suggested that the composition was inspired by Rogier's trip to Italy during the Holy Year of 1450 when he may have seen frescos by Fra Angelico in S. Marco. Campbell tracks the origins of the Scheut Charterhouse and maintains that Rogier could have begun work on the painting even before the founding of the monastery; see Campbell – Stock (eds.), *Rogier van der Weyden* 461–464, esp. 462.

⁹ See *ibidem* 461; Bekaert, "Mystical Dimension in Flemish Primitive Painting" 339–355, 358–359. In particular, Bekaert argues that Rogier would have been able to consult the Herne and Scheut libraries due to his important donations to the charterhouses.

¹⁰ There has been much speculation about the personal nature of the gift. See, for instance, Davies M., *Rogier van der Weyden: An Essay with a Critical Catalogue of Paintings Assigned to Him and to Robert Campin* (London: 1972) 23; Campbell L., "The New Pictorial Language of Roger van der Weyden", in Campbell L. – Stock J. van der (eds.), *Rogier van der Weyden 1400–1464: Master of Passions* (Zwolle – Leuven: 2009) 47.

¹¹ Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 47; Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* I 288; Davies, *Rogier van der Weyden* 211. Recent scholarship has found that the panel is not as severely damaged as was once thought, bringing into question the assumption that it was partially burned in the fire of 1671 in the Escorial Palace. Metzger C., "An Assessment of the Escorial 'Crucifixion': Condition, Quality, and Maker", in Campbell, L. – Stock J. van der – Reynolds C. – Watteuw L. (eds.), *Rogier van der Weyden in Context: Papers Presented at the Seventeenth Symposium for the Study of Underdrawing and Technology in Painting, Held in Leuven, 22–24 October 2009* (Paris – Leuven – Walpole, MA: 2012) 159–168, esp. 159–160.

¹² See Jolly, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions*" 120–121; Davies, *Rogier van der Weyden* 211; and Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 188.

¹³ Hedeman A.D., "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion* and Carthusian Devotional Practices", in Ousterhout R. – Brubaker L. (eds.), *The Sacred Image East and West* (Urbana – Chicago: 1995) 195–196; Jolly, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions*" 116–118; Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* I 285; Zuidema, *Verbeelding en*

Crucifixion does not entirely retreat from a storyline. The Lord's closed eyes and pierced side reveal that he has recently died. Although no sky is visible in the painting, the image is noticeably dark, like the nearly black heavens in Rogier's Philadelphia *Crucifixion*, a 'sister composition' to the Escorial image [Fig. 2]. Both paintings evoke the darkness that descended on Jerusalem around the time of Christ's death, and their blood-red curtains solemnly recall that during those turbulent hours, the veil of the temple was 'rent in twain'.¹⁴

At least by the mid sixteenth century – and likely before that time – the Escorial panel resided near the Gospel pulpit in the monks' choir, possibly as part of a shrine to the reserved Sacrament.¹⁵ According to the charterhouse archives, a red veil of silk was suspended in front of the image,¹⁶ effectively 'doubling' the painted veil within the composition with a real veil outside it. The painted tester with green fringe running along the top of the panel may even have been crowned by a canopy of more red silk, entirely enfolding the crucified Lord in a 'tent' of fabric, both fictive and real.¹⁷ The ensemble would have been particularly striking in a sacramental context since late medieval ciboria containing the Eucharistic body of Christ were often similarly enveloped beneath cloth baldachins.¹⁸ Continuing in this play of illusion and reality, it is significant that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century visitors to the Monastery of San Lorenzo

Ontbeelding 188; Acres A., "Rogier van der Weyden's Painted Texts", *Artibus et Historiae* 21 (2000) 98, note 92; Blockmans W., "From Tournai to Brussels – From Hainaut to Brabant", in Campbell L. – Stock J. van der (eds.), *Rogier van der Weyden 1400–1464: Master of Passions* (Zwolle – Leuven: 2009) 31.

¹⁴ *Matthew* 27:51. For the dark sky in the Philadelphia panel, see Tucker M., "Rogier van der Weyden's Philadelphia 'Crucifixion'", *The Burlington Magazine* 139 (1997) 681. See Hedeman, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*", for the hypothesis that the Philadelphia *Crucifixion* was painted for the Carthusian Charterhouse at Herne.

¹⁵ Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 169–170.

¹⁶ In 1551, Jean Tournear, sacristan at Scheut, recorded that near the 'pulpitum Evangelii' '[...] est alia imago crucifixi mire magnitudinis habens a dextra beatam Virginem, a sinistra vero illius discipuli quem diligebat Jesus imaginem. Clauditur cortinis de rubro saieto'. See: *Historie van het clooster van de Chartoesen tot Scheut bij Brussel*, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, Ms.71G25, fol. 173 verso), in Vos D. de, *Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works*, trans. T. Adkins (New York: 1999) 291, 292; Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 169–170, 176.

¹⁷ Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 176–179, connects the red color of the painted curtain and the 'tent-like' enclosure surrounding the panel to St. Paul's exposition of the Holy of Holies in his *Epistle to the Hebrews*. She does not mention, however, the rending of the curtain at Christ's death or corollaries to Ruusbroec's work.

¹⁸ *Ibidem* 176. The curtained baldachin in Rogier's *Medici Madonna* has been similarly identified as a tabernacle for the Eucharistic Christ Child. See: Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden* 120, 317; Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 178.

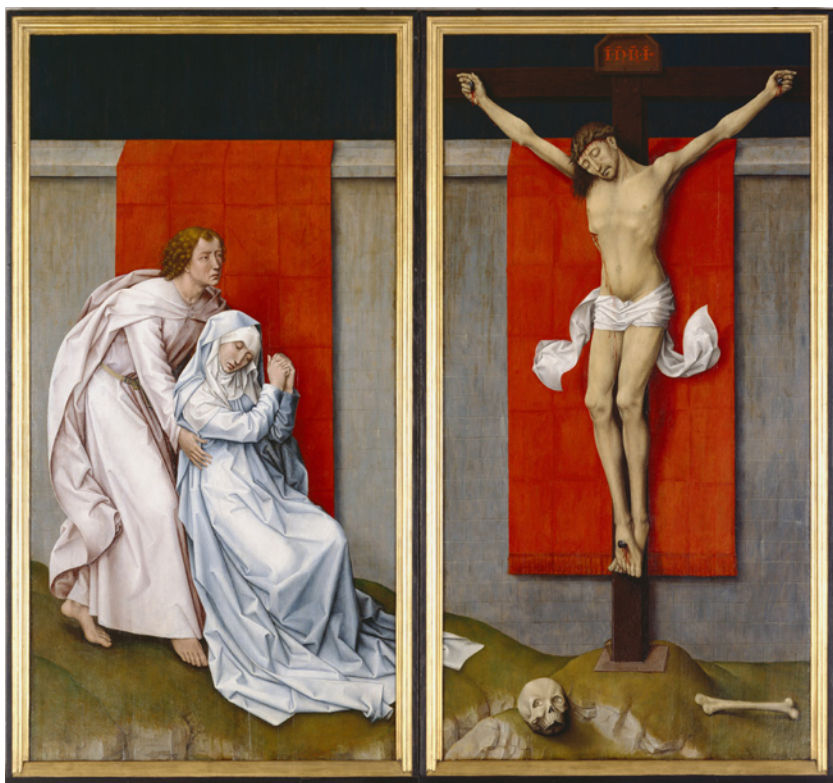


Fig. 2. Rogier van der Weyden, *Diptych of the Crucifixion* (ca. 1463–1464). Oil on panel, left panel: 180.3 × 92.6 cm, right panel: 180.3 × 92.3 cm. Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image © Art Resource, New York, NY.

de El Escorial who saw the painting in more pristine condition routinely noted the *trompe l'oeil* quality of the figures, which at first seemed to be carved from wood.¹⁹ The nearly monochromatic forms of the Virgin and St. John resemble 'demi-grisaille' sculptures, with only their faces and hands colored.²⁰ Indeed, when the Carthusian brothers pulled back the red silk curtain covering the monumental panel, it would have seemed that the same miracle that had transubstantiated the sacramental bread and wine

¹⁹ Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 48.

²⁰ Ibidem 50. See also Jolly, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions*" 113–116, for comments on 'demi-grisaille'.

into the living presence of Christ had also transformed the painted figures into three-dimensional humans tinged with the color of living flesh.²¹

The prominence of this framing canopy of red curtains – both inside and outside the painting – calls to mind imagery from Ruusbroec's *Spiritual Tabernacle*, with its careful description of the sacrifices, furniture, and holy curtains of the tent-sanctuary constructed by the Israelites following their exodus from Egypt. Written primarily after Ruusbroec's own 'exodus' into the wilderness of Groenendaal, the text opens with a Pauline injunction: "Run so that ye may obtain".²² In the seven books that follow, the mystic explains how faithfully to complete this scriptural 'race of love' by receiving the sacraments of baptism and penance, reaching outward in charity for mankind, turning inward in love for God, fostering an orderly life, and emulating the virtues and union with divine love typified by the tabernacle.²³ Ruusbroec's exegetical commentary – ideally suited to the long hours of silent rumination in a Carthusian monastery – illuminates and enriches several important meditative prompts in the Escorial *Crucifixion*. The first is the scarlet curtain suspended in the center of the image, and related to it are the carefully arranged postures and gazes of the Virgin and St. John. While the *Mater dolorosa* folds herself in her cloak and looks down in grief, the evangelist stares trance-like into the darkness, wrapped in a revelatory epiphany with his brow furrowed in concentration.

Brocade cloths of honor are a common motif in Netherlandish painting, and Rogier's oeuvre is no exception. However, the deeply saturated color of the Escorial veil, its sharp creases, and its simple, patternless material are fairly unique in Rogier's work. In fact, set against the dark shadows and muted colors of the composition, the curtain vies with the Lord and his holy mourners as the primary focus of devotion in the painting. Curtains would have been a familiar sight in the fifteenth-century church. They were suspended from racks around the altar and drawn during the consecration of the Sacrament, hung behind images, and used as a back-

²¹ Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 188. For additional information on the sculptural appearance of the figures and the illusion of a cloth baldachin, see Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*" 195; Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* I 288–289.

²² Do: 1, Eo: 1, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D257, E256: "Loept alsoe dat ghi begripen moegt". In citing Ruusbroec's texts, I will use an 'E' to refer to the English translation of the text with corresponding page numbers and a 'D' to refer to the original Middle Dutch. See also 1 *Corinthians* 9:24. For Ruusbroec's 'exodus', see Warnar, *Ruusbroec* 189.

²³ Do: 9, Eo: 8, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D257, E256: 'den loep der minnen'.

drop to spotlight the Host.²⁴ In a Eucharistic context, they recalled the veil that once divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Old Testament tabernacle and temple.²⁵ This veil was imbued with poignant significance by St. Paul in his *Epistle to the Hebrews*, in which he juxtaposed Christ's sacrificial death with the annual oblation of the Jewish high priest. Whereas the presiding Levite entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of an animal to atone for the sins of the people, Christ – the 'high priest of good things to come' – offered 'his own blood' in the Holy of Holies of a 'greater and more perfect tabernacle'.²⁶ His priestly ministration reconciled God and man, removing the Mosaic textile that barricaded the innermost sanctuary of the tabernacle so that his people could with 'boldness [...] enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh'.²⁷ This moment is recounted with dramatic intensity in the Gospels when Christ, having poured out his blood on the altar of the cross, closes his eyes in death as 'the veil of the temple [is] rent in twain from the top to the bottom'.²⁸ With sacramental synchronization, a soldier then literally rends the 'veil of Christ's flesh', piercing his side with a spear.

Building on St. Paul's exegesis, Ruusbroec reveals Christ's Passion as the underlying blueprint for the materials, dimensions, and rituals of the Jewish tabernacle. In book one, he describes Moses' holy tent as a type for the ecclesiastical fabric of Christ's mystical body, a spiritual sanctuary built from the 'living stones' of faithful Christians with the Lord himself as architect.²⁹ The text soon switches gears, however, as Ruusbroec exhorts his readers to become architects themselves: 'Now [...] I am going to teach us how each rational person shall make a spiritual tabernacle for God, in which he shall eternally dwell united with God'.³⁰ Through the exercise

²⁴ In discussing the Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions*, Panofsky cites a miniature from Haarlem's Teyler Stichting, Ms.77, fol. 56, to exemplify the practice of hanging a cloth behind a sculpted image. See: Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* I 285, note 4; also see Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*" 195; Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 50; Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 176. Interestingly, a red veil was also suspended behind the Eucharist at the Basilica of S. Marco in Venice. See: Goffen R., "Icon and Vision: Giovanni Bellini's Half-Length Madonnas", *The Art Bulletin* 57 (1975) 498.

²⁵ Zuidema, *Verbeelding en Ontbeelding* 176–179; Goffen, "Icon and Vision" 497–498.

²⁶ *Hebrews* 9:11.

²⁷ *Hebrews* 10:20.

²⁸ *Matthew* 27:51.

²⁹ See D1: 13/19, E1: 13/18, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D261, E260; D4: 89/96, E4: 86/92, in ibidem D337, E336.

³⁰ D4: 97/99, E4: 93/95, in ibidem D337, E336: 'Nu wille ic voert mire materien volgen ende wille ons leren hoe iegewelc redelec minsche gode sal maken.i. geestelec tabernakel daer hi verenecht met gode ewelec inne woenen sal'.

of virtues and the discipline of vices, the votaries are to prepare mystical candlesticks and dyed badger skins, altars and silver capitals, and ultimately welcome the incarnate God into a Mosaic shrine replicated within their hearts. The walls of this mental sanctum cordon off a site for 'mutual indwelling', in which the devotee dwells in Christ's tabernacle-body, and Christ dwells in the devotee's tabernacle-heart. 'Mutual indwelling' is a critical concept for the transcendent unification with the Holy Trinity that is the climax of Ruusbroec's mystical ascent. The path to this lofty aspiration is mediated through Christ's humanity. The votary imitates the mortal, suffering Christ and receives the Eucharist in order to be united to the Lord in his human nature, clothed in the flesh of fallen man. Since Christ is both perfect man *and* perfect God, he can then lead the worshiper seamlessly into the Trinitarian unity of his divine nature. In a boldly poetic passage from the *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness*, Ruusbroec writes that '[Christ] remained God and became human, that humans might become God', or that they might become 'heavenly divine human being[s]'.³¹

Allegorical curtains feature prominently in the construction of meditative tabernacles. Woven from four different colors, the curtains' white, 'heaven-colored' blue, violet, and 'deep fiery-red' segments each represent different virtues.³² Ruusbroec explains that the red material is dyed twice in the blood of worms to symbolize the charity of the crucified Lord, and echoing St. Paul, he conflates the scarlet cloth with the 'veil' of Christ's bleeding flesh:

He is also clad in twice-dyed red color on account of His love and His mercy. And therefore, He delivered the little worm, that is, His worthy body, unto death. And this is twice-dyed-red color, for He has washed us and honorably tinted us in His blood and clad Himself in the most honorable garment of love and of martyrdom that anyone can imagine.³³

³¹ D979, E92, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spieghel der Eeuwigher Salicheit*, ed. G. de Baere, trans. A. Lefevere, in Baere G. de (ed.), *Jan van Ruusbroec Opera Omnia*, 8, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: 2001), D289, E288: 'Hi bleef god ende wart mensche, op dat de mensche god worde'. D43, E41, in ibidem D197, E196: 'hemelsch, godlec mensche'.

³² D4: 518/20, E4: 498/502, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D379, E378: 'Dierste varue es wit gelijc bocrane, die andre hemelvaruwech, die derde violeit, die vierde dobbelvierech roet'.

³³ D2: 268/273, E2: 253/58, in ibidem D305, E304: 'Hi es oec gecledet met dobbel roeder varuwen overmids sine minne ende sine ontfærmecheit. Ende hier omme hevet hi dat woermken geleverd ter doet, dats sinen werdegen lichame. Ende dit es dobbel roede varuwe, want hi hevet ons ghewasschen ende eerleke geleverd in sinen bloede ende hem selven gecledet met den eersamsten clede der minnen ende der martilien datmen gedinken mach'.

No illustrations accompany Ruusbroec's description of the rending of the Mosaic veil and the Jewish sanctuary's re-consecration in Christ's blood, but so vivid is his descriptive language that the account of the Christianized tabernacle with its new doorway to heaven seems to have been painted in brilliant, twice-dyed red.³⁴ In one of these scarlet-colored verbal images, Ruusbroec compares Christ to the sacrificial red heifer, his 'precious' and 'fragile' body rent and stained 'bloody-red on account of the strokes of the scourges'.³⁵ He is also the 'red stone' upon which the apostles built *Ecclesia*, 'and they died within it and have sealed it, like Christ their master, with their blood'.³⁶

Ruusbroec's repeated references to the blood of worms invite readers to associate this 'deep fiery-red' with a specific pigment – vermilion, which derives from the Latin, *vermiculus*, meaning 'little worm'. The etymology of this color connects Ruusbroec's description of the suffering Christ to a passage from the twenty-second psalm, which he cites explicitly in the *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness*: 'But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people'.³⁷ Interestingly, although a full technical analysis of the Escorial panel is not yet available, it is likely that Rogier painted this cloth of honor with the same vermilion pigment that he is known to have used in the Philadelphia *Crucifixion*.³⁸ The broad expanse of this costly color, finely ground from cinnabar crystals and compounded with oil, would have pointed viewers of the painting toward Ruusbroec's writing in a remarkably tangible way. The pigment's crushing and mixing with oil even evokes the mystic's description of Christ's blood flowing like oil from an olive press: 'He gave Himself to the press, and there He

³⁴ D5: 4558/4594, E5: 4293/4327, in *ibidem* D1047, 1049; E1046, 1048.

³⁵ D5: 4534/4536, E5: 4270/4272, in *ibidem* E1042, 1044; D1043, 1045: 'Ende in deser wijs offerde Cristus sinen eighenen lichame in die doet, die precieos was ende teeder al selke martilie te doeghene, bloedich roet overmids die slaghe der gheeselen'.

³⁶ D5: 1567/1571, E5: 1487/1489, in *ibidem* D751, E750: 'Ende hier omme fundeerden si een gewarech kersten gheloeve op den roeden steen, dat Cristus es [...] Ende si sijnre inne ghestorven ende hebbent ghelijc Cristum, heren meester, met heren bloede gheseghelt'.

³⁷ Psalm 22:6. See also D326/327, E309/311, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spieghel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D225, E224.

³⁸ Tucker, "Rogier van der Weyden's Philadelphia 'Crucifixion'" 681. Note that following the panel's restoration in 1946–1947, Leo van Puyvelde described the cloth as 'vermilion'. See: Metzger, "An Assessment of the Escorial 'Crucifixion'" 161. For comments on Rogier's use of vermilion and especially red lake pigments, see Spring M., "The Materials of Rogier van der Weyden and His Contemporaries in Context", in Campbell, L. – Stock J. van der – Reynolds C. – Watteuw L. (eds.), *Rogier van der Weyden in Context: Papers Presented at the Seventeenth Symposium for the Study of Underdrawing and Technology in Painting, Held in Leuven, 22–24 October 2009* (Paris – Leuven – Walpole, MA: 2012) 97–99.

suffered unto death, and He poured out all His blood'.³⁹ In fact, the *Spiritual Tabernacle* associates this dye made from worms so fundamentally with Christ's precious blood that to both Rogier, who applied the vermillion to the panel, and to the monks who contemplated it, the glistening pigment may have seemed like a relic of the Holy Blood or a glowing pool of sacramental wine. Incidentally, Rogier's curtain makes a double connection to the worm-like condescension of Christ, since both the bloody dye and the silk of the fictive cloth are products derived from worms.

On another level, the image of the crucified Christ suspended before an imposing length of red cloth recalls Ruusbroec's description of the tabernacle's altar of incense. Positioned in front of the veil of the Holy of Holies, Ruusbroec construes the altar's four gilded horns anointed with animal blood as a type for the four, blood-stained arms of the cross.⁴⁰ He writes that it is at this 'inward altar of [Christ's] free will, which is Holy of Holies unto the Lord', that the votary freely chooses to offer himself with the dejected, suffering Christ in order to be united to God.⁴¹ Appropriately, the sacrificial victim in Rogier's painting also mediates access to the divine. The concentrated hue of the veil draws special attention to the red wound in his side, which, like a mystical portal, invites worshipers to make Christ their entryway as they approach the God who 'dwellest between the cherubims' of the Ark of the Covenant, hidden on the other side of the tabernacle curtain.⁴² Significantly, although the curtain, the cross, and the mourners are all slightly off center, the Lord's wound occupies the exact median of the composition.⁴³ As the focal point of the painting, this 'tear' in the 'veil' of Christ's flesh provides a glimpse through the rent fabric of his body to the creased 'veil' of his blood, as if newly unfolded from his side and draped against the stone wall behind him. By displaying the dead Christ in two forms – his body hanging from the cross and his blood hang-

³⁹ D5: 2087/2088, E5: 1977/1978, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D803, E802: 'Doe leverde hi heme ter persen ende daer doghede hi al toter doet ende hi storte ute al gader sijn bloet'. For a related discussion on the blood of Christ and its connection to the artistic practice and materials of Jan van Eyck, see Smith J., *Jan van Eyck and the Poetics of Sacred Painting* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University: 2006).

⁴⁰ D5: 731/745, E5: 701/714, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D645, 647; E644, 646.

⁴¹ D5: 746/747, E5: 715/16, in ibidem D647, E646: 'den inwindegen outaer sijns vrien willen, die den here es heilech der heiligen'. For Ruusbroec's full discussion of the theology of the altar of incense, see D5: 714/840, E5: 684/802 in ibidem D643, 645, 647, 649, 651, 653, 655; E642, 644, 646, 648, 650, 652, 654.

⁴² Psalm 80:1.

⁴³ Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 51.

ing from the green-fringed tester – Rogier imitates the double elevation of the Eucharistic Lord under the species of first bread and then wine. This layering of veils, with the ‘curtain’ of Christ’s flesh crucified against the red silk veil of his blood, conceals and reveals God the Father beneath the fleshy ‘fabric’ of the Incarnation, so that Christ’s battered humanity becomes a living veil shrouding the imageless Trinity. Rogier’s invention gives poignant typological fulfillment to the sacred cloth of the Mosaic tabernacle that barricaded God’s presence on the Mercy Seat, behind the cruciform altar of incense.⁴⁴

Appropriately, Ruusbroec emphasizes that the meditative Holy of Holies constructed within the believer’s heart differs from the historic tabernacle in that it has become a profoundly Christological shrine for the ‘mutual indwelling’ of the incarnate God. The treasures of the Old Testament ark have been transformed into Eucharistic emblems of Christ’s Passion and mercy. In place of the tablets of the old Law, ‘Christ has laid His soul and His body for us as two stone tablets on which with His finger, that is with His Spirit, God has written the whole law and all the commandments’.⁴⁵ The vase of manna becomes a ‘golden pail full of heavenly bread, that is, our common charity in holy Church’, and the budding rod of Aaron reaches its full typological bloom as the wood of the cross that ‘grew and blossomed and brought us the fruit of eternal salvation’.⁴⁶

The wound in Christ’s side, so carefully positioned and highlighted in Rogier’s painting, marks the threshold to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, welcoming votaries into the Holy of Holies of the Lord’s tabernacle-body with the same vibrant vermilion that colors Ruusbroec’s poetic syntax. In a complementary way, the spear wound also stands at the threshold to the entire exegetical argument of the *Spiritual Tabernacle*. The mystic from

⁴⁴ For a discussion of medieval precedents for Christ’s blood-stained body as the curtain of the Holy of Holies, both revealing and concealing his divine nature, see Kessler H.L., “Turning a Blind Eye: Medieval Art and the Dynamics of Contemplation”, in Hamburger J.F. – Bouché A. (eds.), *The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: 2006) 424–25, 432; idem, “The Function of *Vitrum Vestitum* and the Use of *Materia Saphirorum* in Suger’s St-Denis”, in Kessler H.L. (ed.), *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God’s Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: 2000) 193–94, 200.

⁴⁵ D6: 167/169; E6: 161/163, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D1279, E1278: ‘In de arke kerstens gheloefs heeft ons Cristus gheleecht sine siele ende sinen lichame alse .ii. steinene tafelen daer god in ghescreven heeft met sinen vinghere, dat es met sinen gheeste, al de wet ende alle de ghebode’.

⁴⁶ D6: 178/179, E6: 171/172, in ibidem D1279, E1278; ‘Enen guldenen eemer vol van hemelschen broede, dat es onse ghemeine caritate in der heilegher kerken’; D6: 154/155, E6: 147/148, in ibidem D1277, E1276: ‘Maer sine roede groeide ende bloeide ende brachte ons de vrocht ewegher salicheit’.

Groenendaal begins his seven-point discourse on the 'race of love' with a discussion on how to be 'freed of all sins'.⁴⁷ The remaining six points of his treatise, he claims, are contained within this foundational injunction to be purified in the blood of Christ.⁴⁸ Ruusbroec then speaks of two 'stream[s] of grace' emanating, in particular, from the spear wound.⁴⁹ In the first of these streams, 'Christ mingle[s] with water His inmost blood which ran from His side' to wash away the stain of Adam in baptism.⁵⁰ Thereafter, he provides 'the sacrament of penitence, which is the other stream of His holy blood' that, like the broad field of red cloth pooling behind the wounded Christ in the Escorial *Crucifixion*, 'overflows all rims' and 'cannot dry up'.⁵¹

The flood of Christ's charity, epitomized by the twice-dyed fabric, serves as a pattern for Ruusbroec's readers to follow as they prepare their own spiritual curtains to adorn the sanctuary of their hearts. The mystic describes their meditative labor in language redolent of craftsmanship and artistry. They work with a mental warp and woof, beginning with 'fine linen twined, bright white, of soft flax', the color of 'goat-hair', before adding segments of blue and violet.⁵² For the section of red, these devout artisans shed their own blood to make the dye, 'rend[ing] [their] hearts with compassion'.⁵³ This rather violent step in the process of cloth production has a penitential undertone to it, recalling Ruusbroec's counsel from the first book of the treatise that the faithful should approach confession 'with sorrow and with woe of heart'.⁵⁴ The imagery also resonates with the two streams of absolving blood that spilled from Christ's own compassionate heart, 'rent' with a spear. In imitation of him, the faithful doubly 'tint [their] life' with their own blood as they offer heartfelt love to both God and their fellowmen:

⁴⁷ Do: 31/32, Eo: 30/31, in ibidem D259, E258: 'ghevrijt van allen sunden'.

⁴⁸ See Do: 32, Eo: 31, in ibidem.

⁴⁹ D1: 128, E1: 124, in ibidem D273, E272: 'riviere van ghenaden'.

⁵⁰ D1: 109/110; E1: 105/106, in ibidem D271, E270: 'Alsoe ghelikerwijs mingede Cristus sijn innechste bloet, dat ute sire siden liep, met watere'.

⁵¹ D1: 141, E1: 135/136, in ibidem D275, E274: 'dat sacrament der penitencien, dat es de andere riviere sijns heilechs bloeds'; D1: 147/148, E1: 142, in ibidem: 'vloeit te allen boerden over'; D1: 130, E1: 126, in ibidem D273, E272: 'Ende si en mach niet verdroeghen'.

⁵² D4: 522/23, E4: 503, in ibidem D381, E380: 'dobbel byssinen, blickende wit, van sachten vlasse'; D4: 519, E4: 499, in ibidem D379, E378: 'gelijc bocrane'.

⁵³ D2: 246/247, E2: 232/233, in ibidem D303, E302: 'Aldus soude wi onse herte scoren met compassien'.

⁵⁴ D1: 138, E1: 133, in ibidem D275, E274: 'met rouwe ende met wee van herten'.

If we but want to be tiny humble little worms, and to shun what the world seeks [...] thus can we make the noble red color which adorns all virtue. For whoever practices charity in virtues spends, by means of his affection and his devotion, his own blood in honor of God, and in service of his fellow Christian.⁵⁵

Moreover, in place of the nails and spear that rent the curtain of Christ's bleeding flesh, Ruusbroec's readers pierce their mystical cloth with needles as they embroider the virtues they wish to emulate – 'sweet-smelling red roses' for purity, marigolds for obedience, birds for the guidance of the saints, water lilies for generosity, and a spangling of stars for prayer and pious devotion.⁵⁶ The mystic leaves open the possibility for many more allegorical embroideries, each uniquely invented and sewn into the individual curtains of the votary: 'Furthermore, onto these four colors we are to set all the adornment of virtues which our free will and our understanding, in upright obedience, can devise'.⁵⁷ Ultimately, this spiritual handiwork should depict 'letters and [...] images' from the 'loving life of our Lord Jesus Christ' to be 'rehearse[d] incessantly'.⁵⁸ In essence, the finished curtains would function like mirrors for the soul, presenting the faithful with stitched likenesses of Christ, virtues, and saints to be used as models for imitation and guides as they assessed their progress⁵⁹ in Ruusbroec's 'race of love'.

Specular imagery occurs elsewhere in the *Spiritual Tabernacle*, especially in the elaborate discussion of Mosaic dietary laws. Ruusbroec compares the scriptures and legends of the saints to the glassy surface of a pool into which doves gaze to avoid being caught by eagles, flying above them.⁶⁰ Later, in his extrapolation on the qualities of ritually clean fish,

⁵⁵ D2: 247, E2: 233, in *ibidem* D303, E302: 'verwen onse leven met onsen bloede'; D4: 567/574, E4: 545/551, in *ibidem* D385, E384: 'Eerst alsoe dat wi cleine oetmoedege woermkene willen sijn ende scuwen dat de werelt soect [...]. Alsoe moge wi die edele roede varuwe maken die alle dogede verciert. Want so wie karitate in dogeden ufent, overmids sine affectie ende sine devocie verteret hi sijn eigen bloet in der eren goeds ende in orbore sijns evenkerstens'.

⁵⁶ D4: 599, E4: 575, in *ibidem* D389, E388: 'rode rosen van suten gore'; see also D4: 593/651, E4: 569/623, in *ibidem* D389, 391, 393, 395; E388, 390, 392, 394.

⁵⁷ D4: 652/654, E4: 624/626, in *ibidem* D395, E394.

⁵⁸ D4: 2013, E4: 1918, in *ibidem* D543, E542: 'met letteren ende met beelden'; D4: 2022/2025, E4: 1928/30, in *ibidem*: 'ende altoes in onser memori en vernuwen ende veranderen al dat wonder dat god gewracht heeft met sinen vrienden van beginne der werelt, ende sunderlinge die hystorie ende dat minleke leven ons heren Jhesu Cristi'.

⁵⁹ For the role of meditative images in evaluating the state of a votary's soul, see Melion W.S. "Introduction: Meditative Images and the Psychology of Soul", in Falkenburg R. – Melion W.S. – Richardson T.M. (eds.), *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout: 2007).

⁶⁰ D5: 3849/3855, E5: 3621/3626, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D976, E974.

he envisions the inward self dressed first in brown fish scales to emulate the humble Christ and his meek mother, then red scales for the martyrs, green for confessors, and finally white for the virgin saints.⁶¹ The mental image of the reflective surface of these scales enriches Ruusbroec's commentary on pious imitation, as if the soul had donned a suit of armor made from colored mirrors:

After that, we are to clothe our exercise with red scales. That is, that we are to be mindful that, out of love, the Son of God was tortured for our sake. And His passion we are to bear in our memory, as a glorious mirror before our inward eyes, so that we might be mindful of His love and rejoice in every suffering.⁶²

In a similar manner, the luminous curtain in Rogier's painting would have inspired the penance and loving devotion of the Carthusians of Scheut as they gazed, as if through a red mirror, at the boundless blood of their redemption, with the crucified Christ and his steadfast mourners arrayed before it like a mystical 'embroidery pattern' for imitation. The monks may have thus been prompted to internalize, replicate, and painstakingly sew that image of the pale Calvary group into the curtains of their souls. Drawing their own blood with every stitch, the material of their hearts would eventually conform to Rogier's expanse of bloody, red silk. They could then join Ruusbroec's readers who, after weaving and dying their own sections of vermilion cloth, gaze into their souls and behold Christ's 'humanity, which is the mirror of us all'.⁶³

The remainder of this essay will consider the gazes and gestures of St. John and the Virgin Mary, which operate as additional meditative prompts in the Escorial *Crucifixion*, bolstering the significance of Christ's 'twice-dyed' veil of blood. In exploring the new depth that Ruusbroec brings to these prompts, it will be helpful to consider his *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness* alongside the *Spiritual Tabernacle*. Penned in 1369 for a Rich Clare nun, the text frames the Eucharist as the assurance of salvation, the medium for conforming to Christ's image, and the vehicle enabling divine vision. A series of mystical mirrors aids the faithful communicant in being

⁶¹ See D5: 6209/6252, E5: 5855/5895, in *ibidem* D1209, 1211, 1213; E1208, 1210, 1212.

⁶² D5: 6219/6223, E5: 5864/5868, in *ibidem* D1209, E1208: 'Hier na sele wi onse ufeninghe cleeden met roeden scellen. Dat es dat wi ghedinken selen dat de gods sone van minnen ghemaertilijt es omme onsen wille. Ende sine passie sele wi draghen in onse memorie alse enen glorioesen spiegel vore onse inwendeghe oeghen op dat wi sijne minnen ghedinken ende ons verbliden in allen doeghene'.

⁶³ D5: 582, E5: 553/554, in *ibidem* D627, E626: 'sijne menscheit, die onser alder spiegel es'.

united to the Holy Trinity. To this end, Ruusbroec discusses the primordial reflection of God's likeness in each human soul, the spotless and commendable mirror of the Virgin Mary, and Christ, the mirror-image of God.⁶⁴ Using these mirrors, contemplatives can open the inner, 'onefold eye' to ascertain the blinding light of the Trinity and 'gaz[e] with bare sight on the light with the same light. There is eye to eye, mirror to mirror, image to image. With these three [they] are like to God and united with Him'.⁶⁵

Divine vision has long been an important attribute of St. John the Revelator, from his witness of the pre-incarnate Word 'in the beginning [...] with God' to his singular insight into the nature of the dying Christ on Calvary.⁶⁶ Contemplatives regarded him as the great exemplar of the mystical life,⁶⁷ and, not surprisingly, the shadow of St. John lies just beneath the surface of many of Ruusbroec's comments on spiritual vision. For instance, in the *Spiritual Tabernacle* Ruusbroec digresses from his lengthy explanation of the vices symbolized by birds prohibited under Mosaic dietary laws to extol the eagle's special gift of sight. The reference to St. John via his evangelist symbol is not difficult to infer as the mystic compares this bird, which 'stares into the brightness of the sun without flinching', to the contemplative who beholds truth unhindered by images:

Whoever in his inward-turning can empty himself of all images and forms, and all consideration, and elevate his mind in a bare emptiness, is king in nature, above other people, for he flies unto the greatest height of which nature is capable. And he makes his nest and his rest in his essential being, and he stares into the simple truth [...] And his sight is simple and without consideration. And therefore he contemplates the truth without recoiling and without flinching.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See, for instance, D898/969, E844/910, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spiegel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D283, 285, 287, 289; E282, 284, 286, 288; D1790/1803, E1671/1682, in ibidem D371, E370; D513/514, E482, in ibidem D243, E242.

⁶⁵ D1838/1842, E1717/1720, in ibidem D375, E374: 'eenvuldeghe oeghe', 'staert met bloeten ghesichte dat licht met den selven lichte. Daer es oeghe jeghen oeghe spiegel jeghen spiegel, beelde jeghen beelde. Met desen. iij. sijn wi gode ghelijc ende heme gheenegeht'. See also Mertens, "Introduction", in ibidem I 28–29.

⁶⁶ *John* 1:1. For the evangelist's witness of Christ as the divine Logos, see Hamburger J.F., *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: 2002) 17; Deshman R., "Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images", *The Art Bulletin* 79 (1997) 538, 541–542.

⁶⁷ Hamburger, *St. John the Divine* 1–2.

⁶⁸ D5: 6269/6270, E5: 5911/5912, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D1215, E1214: 'staert in clærheit der sonnen sonder wiken'; D5: 6277/6284, E5: 5918/5926, in ibidem D1215, E1214: 'So wat menschen die in sinen inkeere heme gheledeghen can alre beelden ende formen ende alles ghemerces ende sijn ghemoede verheffen in ene bloete ledicheit, hi es een coninc in der naturen boven andere menschen want hi vliecht in dat hoechste dat nature vermach. Ende hi maect sinen nest ende sine raste in sijn wesen ende hi staert

At another point in the treatise, Ruusbroec elaborates on passages from the *Book of Ezekiel* and the *Gospel of St. John* to describe the privileged few who, upon reaching a pinnacle of uninhibited vision of God, 'receiv[e] the face of the eagle, and a hidden knowledge of God'.⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, the *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness*, which chronicles the votary's journey to see and be united with the Holy Trinity, is punctuated with many citations from St. John's Gospel.⁷⁰

In the Escorial *Crucifixion*, the evangelist gazes with a rapt concentration that aligns him with Ruusbroec's highest aspiration for mystical experience – a spiritual vision of the divine. Rogier has drawn special attention to St. John by giving him an unusually portrait-like face, which departs notably from his more standard appearances in Rogier's oeuvre.⁷¹ In his white habit, the beloved disciple models the kind of focused sight that the Carthusians at Our Lady of Grace should have imitated as they gazed at both the painting and the Blessed Sacrament enshrined near it. It is significant that St. John's exemplary stare is unique in the composition. The eyes of the Lord are sightless in death, and the eyes of his grieving mother are downcast and nearly shut. Only the evangelist looks, and yet his sight is not trained directly on the broken and bleeding body of the Lord. Rather, he looks off to the side and into the darkness beyond the red curtain and the stone wall. Ironically, the revelatory epiphany, that has left him astonished with creased brow and slightly opened mouth, remains invisible to viewers of the painting.

Interestingly, in Ruusbroec's writings the transcendent height of spiritual vision is equally austere, barren, and paradoxically imageless. It is 'a stilled emptiness' with neither 'time nor place [...] nor shape, nor color', 'empty of heart', and a 'waste void in the bareness of our essence'.⁷² In this same vein, the *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness*, exhorts readers to 'lift up [their] eyes' to behold the 'living life' flowing from the Trinity, only to

in die eenvoldeghe waerheit [...] Ende sijn ghesichte es eenvoldich ende sonder ghemerc. Ende daer omme scout hi die waerheit sonder wederslach ende sonder wiken'.

⁶⁹ D5: 4995/4996, E5: 4705/4706, in ibidem D1089, E1088: 'staet een anschijn des aers ende .i. verborghen kinnesse gods'.

⁷⁰ I am indebted to Geert Warnar for this observation.

⁷¹ Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 51.

⁷² D5: 228, E5: 222, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D589, E588: 'ene gestilde ledecheit'; D2048/2049, E1910/1911, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spieghel der Eeuwigher Salicheit*, D395, E394: 'tijd noch stat [...] forme noch ghedeente noch varwe'; D165, E156, in ibidem D209, E208: 'ledegh van herten'; D4: 1854/55, E4: 1769, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D527, E524: 'dese woeste idelheit ane te siene ende te besittene in bloetheit ons wesens'.

characterize the sacred vista before their 'gazing eyes' as an impenetrable emptiness – a 'glorious abyss' and a bottomless, formless chasm 'of the richness of God'.⁷³ In a complementary way, the lightning bolt of revelatory sight transfixing St. John's face coincides jarringly with the dismal aftermath of Christ's death, when the heavens darkened and the temple curtain was torn asunder. And yet this moment of greatest despair and emptiness was also a moment of converting vision for one of the Romans attending the execution on Calvary: 'And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that [Jesus] so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God'.⁷⁴ Christian legend often identifies this centurion as the blind St. Longinus and conflates him with the soldier who pierced the side of Christ. Blood from the Sacred Heart ran down the spear and anointed St. Longinus' eyes, healing him from both physical blindness and the spiritual blindness of his paganism. The *Spiritual Tabernacle* honors this 'knight who pierced [Christ's] dead body' by characterizing him as a priest, since his spear opened the floodgates of 'holy baptism and the other sacraments which purify us from sins'.⁷⁵ It is appropriate that Ruusbroec refers to these streams of Christ's cleansing blood as the 'floods of night', 'which wash away, in faith, the night of darkness' since St. Longinus performed his priestly act inadvertently, during the darkness of his unbelief and just after the shadows enveloping Jerusalem had lifted.⁷⁶ Newly 'baptized' in blood, the centurion could suddenly see past the dead man nailed to the cross and behold the divinity of the Son of God with blinding clarity.

In the same manner, St. John's eyewitness on Calvary extends beyond the suffering humanity of Christ to glimpse his divinity. Immediately after reporting the piercing of the Lord's side, the evangelist writes: 'And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe'.⁷⁷ In the Vienna *Crucifixion* and the Uffizi

⁷³ D1730/1733, E1617/1620, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spieghel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D365, E364: 'Nu heft dan op uwe ooeghen boven redene ende boven alle unfeninghe van dooghden, ende siet ane met minnenden gheeste, met starenden ooeghen dat levende leven, dat orsprong ende sake es alles levens ende alre heilecheit. Dat es ane te siene alse .i. glorioos abys der rijcheit gods [...]'

⁷⁴ *Mark* 15:39.

⁷⁵ D5: 4626/4628, E5: 4357/4359, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D1053, E1052: 'die riddere die met den speere den doeden lichame in sine side stac. Ende daer ute vloyde ons die heileghe doepe ende die andere sacramente die ons suveren van sonden'.

⁷⁶ D5: 1438/1440, E5: 1361/1363, in *ibidem* D737, E736: 'die vloede der nacht [...] die ave dwaen in den gheloeve die nacht der donkerheit'.

⁷⁷ *John* 19:35.

Entombment, Rogier underscores the authority of the apostle's testimony of the Passion by depicting a pen and ink well in his possession.⁷⁸ The Escorial panel, by contrast, does not invite viewers to corroborate the painted narrative with St. John's written account so much as it encourages them to join him in looking. Although most viewers could not have duplicated the penetrating gaze of the eagle-eyed evangelist into the blinding abyss, they could have emulated his spiritual insight at different levels of vision. His invitation to faith – 'that ye might believe' – urges them to follow his gaze through the rent veil of the Old Law and into the new Holy of Holies of the divine tabernacle. To this effect, the blood-red cloth of honor that so elegantly re-fashions this narrative of Christ's death into a 'transhistorical' icon becomes a pivotal mechanism in the painting, prompting viewers to meditate on deeper theological mysteries, akin to, if not identical with, St. John's imageless revelation in the darkness.

Ruusbroec helps explain the way votaries could use a field of color, like the expanse of saturated red backing the crucified Christ, to hone their spiritual perception. One of the most strikingly visual sections in the *Spiritual Tabernacle* is its typological exposition on the Apostles' Creed. The mystic associates each of the precious stones in the breastplate of the Jewish high priest with one of the twelve disciples, using the jewels' physical properties of color and light refraction to craft nuanced visions of Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and divinity. This rhetorical tour de force engages the reader in an apostolic confession of faith expressed through images, each of which seems like a visionary manifestation formed from the colored light shining through the gems' translucent facets. For instance, St. Thomas' sapphire is described as 'yellow with purple color, and seems mixed with gold powder', thus evoking Christ's Entombment: 'For when His noble soul went to hell, His body lay in the grave: yellow, by being bereft of the soul; purple, by His bloody wounds; mixed with gold powder, by the fact that it was united to the godhead'.⁷⁹ St. James the Great's witness of the Incarnation is set forth more abstractly, with the image of the Word made flesh taking shape from the verdant associations implicit in the color green:

⁷⁸ See Acres, "Rogier van der Weyden's Painted Texts" 97–101.

⁷⁹ D5: 1263/1264, E5: 1198, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D719, E718: 'gheel met purpur varuwen ende sciјnt met gout pulvere gheminghet'; D5: 1267/1270, E5: 1201/1204, in ibidem D721, E720: 'Want doen sine edele ziele voer ter hillen, doen lach sijn lichame in den grave, gheel overmids beroevinghe der zielen, purperen overmids sine bloedeghe wonden, gheminct met gout pulvere overmids dat hi gheenecht was der godheit'.

In this article we liken the son of God to the lovely stone, called emerald, which is so green that leaves and grass and everything that is green cannot compare to its greenness. And it fills and feeds each person's vision which considers it, by means of its greenness. That the eternal Word of the Father became man is the greenest color that was ever seen.⁸⁰

Similarly, the green of St. James the Less' jasper stone imprints the mystery of the Ascension on the mind of the viewer like a mental 'after-image' emblazoned on the retina: 'And therefore we liken it to the ascension of our Lord, which was green and lovely in the eyes of the apostles and so enjoyable that afterward, they could not forget it their whole life long'.⁸¹ By contrast, St. Andrew's testimony of Christ's humanity relies not on color but on the dazzling reflection of sunlight in an uncarved topaz:

And in the reflection of the sun, the topaz transcends all stones in brilliance. So, likewise, is the humanity of Christ transcending in brilliance [...] [a]nd in this way, by means of its great brilliance, the topaz also draws into itself and fills with images the vision of all to whom it is present.⁸²

Of special pertinence to Rogier's painting is Ruusbroec's discussion of red jewels. He associates St. Peter's declaration of faith in God the Father at the opening of the Creed with carnelian, 'blood-red, like red earth' and 'the least expensive of all gemstones'.⁸³ He then explains that, like the undervalued carnelian, Christ was overlooked, rejected, and killed by ignorant builders who failed to acknowledge him as the great rock anchoring together the fabric of *Ecclesia* at the 'head of the corner'.⁸⁴ Incidentally, St. Peter, whose name means 'stone', plays a complementary role in this analogy as the bedrock of leadership undergirding Christ's newly constructed Church. Moreover, those who are 'united by faith and love to

⁸⁰ D5: 1193/1198, E5: 1133/1137, in *ibidem* D713, E712: 'In desen artikelē gheliken wi dien sone goods dien graciosen steene die smaragdus hetet, die alsoe groene es dat loef ende ghes ende al dat grune es, sijnre groenheit niet gheliken en mach. Ende hi vervult ende spijst elcs menschen ghesichte diene anesiet overmids sine groenheit. Dat dat eweghe woert dies vaders mensche worden es, dat es die groenste varuwe die ie ghesien wart'.

⁸¹ D5: 1294/1297, E5: 1228/1230, in *ibidem* D723, E722: 'Ende hier omme ghelike wine der opvaert ons heren, die groene was ende gracious in dien ogen der apostelen ende alsoe ghelustelec dat sijs daer na in al haren levene niet vergheten en mochten'.

⁸² D5: 1156/1165, E5: 1097/1106, in *ibidem* D709, E708: 'Ende in dien wederblicke der sonnen onthoecht die thopaes in clærheiden allen ghesteinte. Alsoe ghelikerwijs es die menscheit Cristi onthogende in clærheiden... [e]nde in deser wijs treect ende verbeelt oec die thopaes alle ghesichten in heme die hi jeghewordech es overmids sine groete clærheit'.

⁸³ D5: 1098/1099, E5: 1043/1044, in *ibidem* D703, E702: 'bloedachtech roet ghelijc roeder erden ende hi es die ondieste gemme onder alle ghesteinten'.

⁸⁴ See D5: 1123/1129, E5: 1066/71, in *ibidem* D705, 707; E704, 706; *Matthew* 21:42.

the noble red stone, that is Christ Jesus, [...] are enlightened, and led by faith into a supernatural knowledge of His Father'.⁸⁵ Indeed, St. Peter's apostolic vision of God is mediated through Christ, as if the 'prince of the apostles' were looking through the carnelian itself:

And by the revelation of the Father, [St. Peter] became a son of sight. And therefore, he saw, in spirit the Son united to our humanity, and he said: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God'. And he also saw, into the midst, that is, between the Father and the Holy Spirit, the centermost Person, the same Son in the unity of divine nature. And by means of the same intermediary, that is, by the Son, he also saw the eternal Father, who is the eternal beginning of the Holy Trinity.⁸⁶

Ruusbroec gives special weight to the spiritual vision afforded by this Christological gem, for he also associates the stone with Reuben, son of the patriarch Jacob, who is a typological 'figure for St. Peter' and whose name means 'a son of sight, or the one who sees the son, or the one who sees into the midst, or by means of the intermediary'.⁸⁷ The inexpensive, 'blood-red' carnelian underscores that, in a paradoxical way, the abased, undervalued humanity of Christ – colored red with the blood of his Passion – does not impede apprehension of the divine God hidden in mortal flesh. Rather, for a 'son of sight' like St. Peter, the visage of the tortured man on Calvary becomes a translucent medium, opening a vision into Christ's resplendent unity with the Trinity.

The vermilion veil in the Escorial *Crucifixion* – fashioned from crystal-line cinnabar that, like carnelian, is also 'blood-red, like red earth' – serves a similar, mediating function. In its color and material, the cloth facilitates contemplation of the sacrificial body of the Lord, and it prompts

⁸⁵ D5: 1100/1103, E5: 1044/1047, in ibidem D703, E702: 'Want alse wi gheenecht werden overmids gheloeve ende minne den edelen roeden stene, dat es Cristus Jhesus, soe werden wi overmids hem verlicht ende met gheloeve gheleid in een overnaturlec kinnesse sijns vader'.

⁸⁶ D5: 1109, E5: 1053, in ibidem D705, E704: 'die een prince es der apostelen'; D5: 1110/1117, E5: 1054/1060, in ibidem D705, E704: 'Ende hi wart overmids oppenbaringhe des vaders een sone des ghesichts. Ende hier omme sach hi in den gheeste den sone gheenecht onser menscheit ende sprac: "Du best Cristus, dies levende goods sone". Ende hi sach oec in midden, dat es tusschen den vader ende den heileghen gheest, den middelsten persoon, den selven sone in eneeheit godleker naturen. Ende hi sach oec overmids dat selve middel, dat es overmids den sone, den eweghen vader, die een ewech ane beghin es der heilegher triniteit'.

⁸⁷ D5: 1105/1108, E5: 1049/1052, in ibidem D703, 705; E702, 704: 'Want Ruben, die ierste sone her Jacobs, die ene figure was van sinte Petre, dese Ruben luud alsoe vele als een sone dies ghesichts, ochte die siet den sone, ochte die siet in midden ocht overmids dat middel'.

exegetical meditation on the nature of the Trinity, perceived through the bleeding curtain of Christ's flesh. Furthermore, this swath of vermilion pigment animates and amplifies the converting vision of St. Longinus, who opened his formerly sightless eyes and, in a red haze of healing, baptizing blood, affirmed the divinity of the son of God. It also frames St. John's invitation to believe in the Lord, whom he witnessed wounded and red in the blood of his pierced heart. In all these instances, the scarlet field of Christ's blood marks the threshold between the limitations of corporeal sight and the depth of revelatory vision, in much the way that a partially transparent gem or a silk veil can both conceal and reveal heavenly realities so incomprehensible that, for Ruusbroec, they can only be articulated in terms of darkness and emptiness.

Not surprisingly, the mystic casts St. John's contribution to the Creed in ruby-red tones as the beloved disciple describes Christ's suffering under Pontius Pilate. Interestingly, the rhetorical image that accompanies this confession of faith resembles Rogier's painterly juxtaposition of luminous scarlet with deep shadows: 'Thus was Christ, our ruby stone, fiery as a burning coal [...] and particularly in His passion and when He was crucified. And in His death, He became so brightly flashing that all the darkness of sins cannot overcome the splendor'.⁸⁸ For viewers who imitated St. John's intent gaze as they contemplated Rogier's painting, the 'twice-dyed' red of the curtain would have filled their vision. Like the jasper-green that was seared into the minds of the apostles who witnessed Christ's Ascension, the pool of vermilion may have lingered with the Scheut Carthusians as an after-image, encasing their meditation in the saturated hue of Christ's mediating blood, even after they had looked away from the painting.

Ruusbroec's text helps readers understand part of what St. John perceived when he witnessed the piercing of Christ's side and gazed through the Lord's ruby veil of blood into the burning red of his Sacred Heart. The *Spiritual Tabernacle* explains that Christ's physical suffering on Calvary was only an outward manifestation of his 'inward activity', the agonizing torment that played out with greatest intensity within his soul.⁸⁹ Ruusbroec uses markedly liturgical imagery to expound this solitary 'Passion of the heart' and relates it to the annual ritual performed by the Old Testament

⁸⁸ D5: 1241/1245, E5: 1177/1180, in *ibidem* D717, E716: 'Aldus was Cristus onse carbonkel steen, vierech alse een berrende cole [...] ende sunderlinghe in sire passien ende doe hi ghecruset wart. Ende in sire dooet es hi soe clare blickende worden dat alle donkerheit der sunden die claeinheit niet verwinnen en mach'.

⁸⁹ D5: 4588, E5: 4321, in *ibidem* D1049, E1048: 'inwendeghe werck'.

high priest, who also officiated before the Mercy Seat alone and hidden deep within the tabernacle. 'Clad in virtues as a deacon or a minor priest', Christ swings 'a censer full of burning coals, namely, His heart full of burning love', and rends the curtain of the Holy of Holies, cleansing the sanctuary in his blood.⁹⁰ Rogier's fictive silk veil, which vividly calls to mind the rites and sacred accoutrements of the Jewish tabernacle, prompts viewers to look 'internally' with St John and imagine the hidden, priestly Passion that 'was the (very) inspiration of His outward suffering'.⁹¹

In fact, Rogier has stripped away much of the 'exterior view' of the Lord's execution as it appears in his Berlin, Abegg, and Vienna *Crucifixions*. In the Scheut painting there are no anguished angels or groups of mourning women. A stone wall blocks any glimpse of Jerusalem on the horizon, and the sky has been drained of color. A profound silence and stillness permeates the composition. Even the breeze that routinely twists the long ends of Christ's loin cloth into calligraphic lines has stopped blowing.⁹² Rogier has telescoped the viewers' attention inward toward the quiet, tear-streaked face of Christ. St. John's preoccupied trance heightens the numbing affect of the painting, while the Virgin's downward, soul-searching glance takes the inward trajectory even deeper as she ponders another 'hidden passion', the inner *compassio* that wracked her own heart with acute pain. This palpable sense of introspection invites the votary to focus on the center and 'inner heart' of the composition – the wound in Christ's side. As mentioned earlier, the red of the curtain frames and reiterates the red of the wound so that the bloody Mosaic veil elides with the torn curtain of Christ's flesh, granting access to a Holy of Holies in the Sacred Heart. To perceive the hidden depths of Christ's suffering, obscured in the blood of his silent liturgy, viewers of Rogier's painting may have imaginatively approached the heart of Jesus. In the *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness* Ruusbroec describes such a pilgrimage: 'For He shall unfurl His glorious loving heart for you, and the innermost of His soul, all

⁹⁰ D5: 4602, E5: 4334/4335, in *ibidem* D1051, E1050: 'met doecheden ghecleedt also .i. dyaken ochte .i. clein priester'; D5: 4564/4565, E5: 4299, in *ibidem* D1047, E1046: '.i. wieroec vat vol berrender colen, dat was sijn herte vol berrender minnen'; see also D5: 4560/4586, E5: 4295/4319, in *ibidem* D1047, 1049; E1046, 1048.

⁹¹ D5: 4590, E5: 4323/4324, in *ibidem* D1049, E1048: 'het was die forme des doeghens van buten'.

⁹² Acres, "Rogier van der Weyden's Painted Texts" 98. Acres contrasts the movement, blowing loincloth, and narrative detail in the Vienna *Crucifixion* with the timeless mood of the Philadelphia and Escorial *Crucifixions*.

full of glory, grace, joy, and fidelity [...] [t]he open wound in His side shall be your gate to eternal life'.⁹³

St. John models the revelatory effects of this enlightened view into the interior suffering of Christ's heart not only by his astonished expression but also by the position of his upturned head and outstretched hands. This same posture occurs elsewhere in Rogier's oeuvre and consistently accompanies divine vision. In the *Bladelin Triptych*, the balding magus in the foreground adopts a similar position as he beholds a vision of the Christ Child superimposed on the Star of Bethlehem. In the Beaune *Last Judgment*, several of the apostles lift their hands in adoration as they watch the celestial judge consign the dead to paradise and hell. But St. John's gesture most closely mirrors the stance of the Virgin Mary in the *Miraflores Altarpiece*,⁹⁴ where the Mother of God lifts her arms and face in wonder to see her dead son triumphantly resurrected from the grave [Fig. 3]. Theologically, the beloved disciple's divine vision secured him a special identification with Christ, even casting him as an *alter Christus*.⁹⁵ This transformation into a type of Christ is explicated in St. John's own Gospel, when the dying Lord entrusts his mother to the evangelist's care: 'When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!'⁹⁶ Devotees of St. John understood these words to have carried the same transformative power as Christ's declaration at the Last Supper: 'Take, eat; this is my body' and 'this is my blood of the new testament'.⁹⁷ The Lord's pronouncement on Calvary became a kind of consecration, 'transubstantiating' St. John into another son of the Virgin Mary.⁹⁸ Significantly, the evangelist was likewise understood to participate in Christ's priesthood, assisting at the first sacrifice of the

⁹³ D54/58, E52/55, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spiegel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D197, E196: 'Want hi sal u openen sine gloriose, minnende herte ende die binnenste sijne zielen, al vol glorien, gratien ende vrouwen ende trouwen [...] [d]ie opene wonde sijne ziden sal zijn uwe pooerte in dat eeweghe leven'.

⁹⁴ Lorne Campbell also has observed this similarity, although he makes no comment on its significance. See Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 51. For general comments on this gesture's association with sanctity, see Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: 1972) 66.

⁹⁵ John 11. See Hamburger, *St. John the Divine* 4–5, 17; Deshman R., "Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images", *The Art Bulletin* 79 (1997) 538, 541–542.

⁹⁶ John 18:26–27.

⁹⁷ Matthew 26:26, 28.

⁹⁸ Hamburger, *St. John the Divine* 165–166, 175–176.



Fig. 3. Rogier van der Weyden, "Christ Appearing to His Mother", right panel of the *Miraflores Altarpiece*, commissioned by Juan II of Castille and given to the Charterhouse of Miraflores (ca. 1442–1445). Oil on panel, right panel: 73.8 × 44.5 cm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Image © Art Resource, New York, NY.

mass on Calvary.⁹⁹ The position of St. John's hands in the Escorial *Crucifixion* even resembles the gesture of a priest presiding at the Eucharist.¹⁰⁰ Having looked into the hidden tabernacle of Christ's heart and witnessed his wrenching, interior Passion, the eagle-eyed apostle humbly lifts his own hands to emulate the great high 'priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec'¹⁰¹ who, with outstretched arms pinned in place on the cross, eternally consecrates the oblation of his own body and blood.

The priestly evangelist, vested in his white, Carthusian-like robes, makes an ideal exemplar for those monks at the Our Lady of Grace Charterhouse who were also ordained priests. His stance and gaze would have inspired them to identify with Christ so closely that, like St. John, they could share in his Passion and glimpse his divine nature as they ministered at the altar. In alluding to a priest's mystical crucifixion with Christ, Rogier was tapping into a devotional trope deeply cherished by the Carthusians. In fact, for masses celebrated within the walls of their charterhouses, the priests of St. Bruno's order were permitted to depart from the standard gesture of prayer used during the Consecration and instead arrange their arms in the shape of a cross, liturgically 'crucifying' themselves as the elements before them transformed into Christ's body and blood.¹⁰² For Ruusbroec, the relationship between the Eucharistic Christ and his people was so close that he describes priests and communicants being offered, consecrated, elevated, and even eaten, as if they had become hosts themselves. For instance, just as a priest offers bread to God, so Christ 'offer[s] Himself and us, with His humble death, to the graciousness of His Father'.¹⁰³ In the *Spiritual Tabernacle* the devout priest is 'consecrated to God', and 'Christ gives him His power so that with Him he can bear the sins of the world, and pray for them'.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, whereas the Lamb of God is elevated above the altar in a mystical reenactment of the raising of the cross, the priest 'elevates himself [...] and gives himself a second time into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ'.¹⁰⁵ Finally, in the *Mirror of*

⁹⁹ Ibidem 165–166, 170.

¹⁰⁰ Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*" 196.

¹⁰¹ *Hebrews* 5:6; 7:3.

¹⁰² Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*" 196.

¹⁰³ D861/862, E811/812, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spieghel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D279, E278: 'Hi offerde hem ende ons, met sijne oedmoedegheer dooet, der ghenadegheit sijns vader'.

¹⁰⁴ D5: 3474, E5: 3271/3272, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D939, E938: 'hi es gode gheheilecht'; D5: 3478/3479, E5: 3275/327, in ibidem: 'Ende Cristus die gheeft heme sine macht op dat hi met heme draghen ende verbidden moghe die sonden der werelt'.

¹⁰⁵ D5: 3482/3484, E5: 3279/3281, in ibidem D939, E938: 'so verheft hi hem selven [...] ende gheeft heme anderwerf in die hande ons heren Jhesu Cristi'.

Eternal Blessedness the incarnate God's unity with his people is styled as a mutual sacramental banquet in which the faithful 'shall always eat and be eaten'.¹⁰⁶

These cooperative oblations, in which Christ, the priest, and the communicants are each sacrificed liturgically, correlate with another meditative argument in the *Spiritual Tabernacle*, that of holocaustic sacrifice. Throughout the treatise, the 'twice-dyed' scarlet hue that occupies such an important place in Ruusbroec's exegesis is consistently associated with burning. Up to this point, I have focused primarily on the color's allusion to blood – both the selfless blood of Christ, poured out as he 'd[ied] of love for the sins of the world', and also the charitable blood of his imitators spent in honor of God and neighbor.¹⁰⁷ The sacrificial blood of their loving hearts, however, is inextricably connected to the brilliant red flames of the burnt offerings at the Mosaic tabernacle. The mystic from Groenendaal speaks of Christ as the paschal lamb, 'roasted for us on the cross, in the fire of love and of martyrdom', and in the section of his treatise exhorting readers to weave spiritual veils in honor of the Lord's blood-red charity, Ruusbroec expounds on the relationship between fire and cloth dyed in worms' blood:

And it is twice-dyed red, and like a fire, for it unites us with God and with our fellow-Christian [...] [a]nd thus he has the fiery color called flaming-red, for it burns up all shortcomings and it perfects all virtues. Therefore, he wears the wedding garment, the noble scarlet mantle which Christ, the noble humble lover, wore on the day of love when He spent His blood in love and brought to perfection the works of highest charity in honor of His Father and in service of all people.¹⁰⁸

Enriched by Ruusbroec's writings, the red curtain in the Escorial *Crucifixion* can be seen not only as the veil of Christ's blood but also the scorching fire beneath the altar of his cross and the inspiration for the votary's

¹⁰⁶ D777, E732, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spiegel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D271, E270: 'aldus selen wi altoes eten ende werden gheten'.

¹⁰⁷ D5: 3816/3817, E5: 3590/3591, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D973, E972: 'van minnen stervende vore die sonden der werelt'.

¹⁰⁸ D5: 4235/4236, E5: 3988/3989, in ibidem D1015, E1014: 'dat ons ghebraden es ane den cruce in dat vier der minnen ende der maertilen'; D4: 566/579, E4: 543/556, in ibidem D385, 387; E384, 386: 'Ende si es dobbel roet ende gelijc den viere, want si enecht ons met gode ende met onsen evenkersten [...] [e]nde alsoe hevet hi die vierege varuwe diemen vlammech noemt, want si verberent alle gebreke ende si volmaect alle dogede. Ende hier omme hevet hi dat brulocht cleet, dien edelen coccinen mantel, omme dien Cristus, die hoge oetmoedege minnere, droech in den dage der minnen, doen hi sijn bloet in minnen verteerde ende die werke der hoechster karitaten volbrachte in die ere sijns vaders ende in orbre alre minscen'.

fervent self-sacrifice. Fire imagery figures frequently in Ruusbroec's oeuvre as a rhetorical device illustrating an exalted level of unity with God, when the contemplative is 'burned up' in divine light.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, in the *Spiritual Tabernacle*, the believers who labor on their mental tabernacles encounter this fire of heavenly light through a 'shadow' cast by the person of Christ, a concept which Ruusbroec unfolds in typological and etymological arguments. As his readers rebuild the holy tent and refashion the Ark of the Covenant within their hearts, the mystic enjoins them to become Beseleel and Oliab, the Old Testament craftsmen who oversaw the construction of the tabernacle. Beseleel, whose name means 'the shadow of God, or a divine overshadowing', is especially pertinent to Ruusbroec's discussion.¹¹⁰ He exhorts the faithful to consider carefully the names of Beseleel's ancestors. Ur, the architect's grandfather, means 'light, or fire, or burning up, or a window', and Uri, son of Ur, means 'my light, or my fire, or my burning-up, or my opening'.¹¹¹ These names become the basis for an elaborate discourse on the glowing attributes of God, particularly his love, and the mystic advises his readers to replicate this shining genealogy in their hearts, so that Beseleel, his father, and grandfather can be 'born in us'.¹¹²

Appropriately, Beseleel, the 'shadow of God', stands at the end of a genealogical line of effulgent family members, as if silhouetted against their light. His name teaches Ruusbroec's aspiring architects how to imitate Christ so closely that they become shadows of God themselves as they labor on their spiritual tabernacles. Specifically, the mystic explains that Christ's humanity intercepts the light of his divinity, creating a shadow

¹⁰⁹ For an excellent analysis of this theme, see G. de Baere – T. Mertens – H. Noë, "Introduction", in Ruusbroec, *Vanden blinkenden steen; Vanden vier becoringhen; Vanden kerstenen ghelove; Brieven*, eds. Baere – Mertens – Noë, trans. A. Lefevere, in Baere G. de (ed.), *Jan van Ruusbroec Opera Omnia*, 10, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: 1991) 15–16.

¹¹⁰ D4: 372, E4: 356/357, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel*, D365, E364: 'ene scaduwe goeds, ocht een godlec omme scaduwen'; see also D4: 129/130, E4: 124/125, in ibidem D341, E340. Ruusbroec reiterates this injunction at the end of the *Spiritual Tabernacle* during his discussion of the Ark of the Covenant. See D6: 29/30, E6: 28/29, in ibidem D1265, E1264.

¹¹¹ D4: 165/166, E4: 157, in ibidem D343, E342: 'licht, och vier, ochte verberren, ochte ene venstere'; D4: 236/237, E4: 226, in ibidem D351, E350: 'mijn licht, ochte mijn vier, ochte mijn verberren, ochte mine oepeninge'.

¹¹² D4: 234, E4: 224, in ibidem D351, E350: 'geboren in ons'; see also D4: 303/309, E4: 294/297, in ibidem D357, 359; E356. 358. For Ruusbroec's lengthy etymological discourse, see D4: 137/316, E4: 131/303, in ibidem D341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359; E340, 342, 344, 346, 348, 350, 352, 354, 356, 358.

that can be impressed on the will of humble, obedient souls.¹¹³ This shadow-image of Christ guides the votary's movements, both internally and externally:

You know well that a shadow always moves in conformity with every movement of that from which it arises and follows it in all its ways. If then we are the shadow of God through obedience of will, we must follow the Spirit of God and Its motion within, and we must follow the humanity of our Lord and His teaching without, both in counsel and in the commandments.¹¹⁴

In a larger sense, it is significant that the creator of the Mosaic tabernacle and all its vessels, vestments, and furniture, is epitomized, not by light or fire, but by a shadow, an image – albeit an ephemeral one – with shape and contour. Beseleel's artifice in creating the sacred objects of Israel's worship typifies the divine artifice that created Christ, the 'image of God', who is the center of worship under the New Law. In fact, the use of the term 'shadow', and especially 'overshadowing' (*scaduwe* and *scaduwen*), echoes the scriptural account of Christ's Incarnation, when the 'image of God' was 'constructed' in the womb of the Virgin Mary: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall *overshadow* thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God'.¹¹⁵ Ruusbroec writes that through the 'divine overshadowing' of Beseleel's name, the human soul 'becomes God's overshadowing and God his overshadowing, for God rests and dwells in him, and he in God'.¹¹⁶ It is fitting that Ruusbroec brings together themes of Incarnation, artifice, light, and shadow in this way, for the spiritual tabernacle is itself a kind of shadow – an intangible work of meditative craftsmanship to help votaries visualize their 'mutual indwelling' with God made flesh.

Ruusbroec's finely nuanced exegesis coalesces with special power in Rogier's painting, where the 'fiery-red' curtain, burning with divine love in the furnace of Christ's martyrdom, creates glowing contours for the lifeless shell of the Lord's body hanging from the cross. The image may have

¹¹³ D4: 373/397, E4: 358/381, in *ibidem* D365, 367; E364, 366.

¹¹⁴ D4: 398/403, E4: 382/387, in *ibidem* D367, E366: 'Ghi wet wel dat hare die scadue altoes beweget na alle die maniere des geens daer si ave comt ende volget hem na in allen sinen wegen. Sijn wi dan die scadue goeds overmids gehoersamheit van wille, soe moten wi volgen den geeste goeds ende sire bewegingen van binnen ende wi moten volgen der menscheit ons heren ende sire leren van buten, beide in rade ende in geboden'.

¹¹⁵ *Luke* 1:35, italics added for emphasis.

¹¹⁶ D4: 408/409, E4: 392/393, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D367, E366: 'Daer inne wert hi goeds ommescaduinge ende god sine ommescaduinge, want god rust ende woent in heme ende hi in gode'.

invited the Scheut Carthusians to consider the shadow imprinted on the vermilion material of their own hearts by the suffering, human Christ as he intercepts the radiant light of his divine nature. Indeed, the painted shadows, which accentuate the three-dimensional illusion of this statue-like Calvary group, invite such contemplation. Furthermore, the grieving Virgin and St. John provide ideal patterns for votaries attempting to replicate each movement and attribute of Christ in their souls. Literally standing in the shadow of their dead God, the *Mater dolorosa* and her adopted son have conformed themselves to Christ's image, to the point that they even share the fiery backdrop of his twice-dyed curtain of blood. Their colorless garments drain them of much of their individuality and draw attention instead to their postures and gazes as they are subsumed into the persona of Christ.

With his hands raised like a priest reciting the Canon of the Mass, St. John 'shadows' the 'high priest of good things to come' and stands against a portion of Christ's scarlet cloth, which glows like the 'fire of love' in the holocaustic Eucharist, 'so simple and so great that nothing escapes it, but it swallows and consumes everything into oneness'.¹¹⁷ For her part, the Virgin Mary 'shadows' Christ's blood-red burnt offering not only on Calvary but throughout her life. Ruusbroec sets her forth as an example for 'all believing people [...] [who] humble their soul and offer it to God, pouring out blood through penitence'.¹¹⁸ He writes that even before Christ's birth, the Virgin exercised such humility that God accepted her canticle of praise at the Visitation as 'a blessed offering wholly to be burned in love'.¹¹⁹ Beneath the shadow of her son's cross, however, the Mother of God participates most profoundly in Christ's fiery oblation. If St. John beholds the dying Lord's divinity and assists in his priesthood, the Virgin Mary creates an important foil by imitating the human Christ, the victim who suffered in the flesh he received from her. The Virgin's *compassio* is a familiar theme in Rogier's oeuvre, as well as in Carthusian spirituality, and it re-occurs with characteristic poignancy in the Escorial

¹¹⁷ D5: 3824/3826, E5: 3598/3600, in *ibidem* D973, E972: 'Want dat vier der minnen es so eenvoldich ende so groet dat hem niet en ontblijft, maer al verslent ende verteert in enicheit'.

¹¹⁸ D5: 3940/3941, E5: 3704/3705, in *ibidem* D985, E984: 'Siet, aldus moeten alle gheloveghe menschen hare sielen gode oetmoedeghen ende offeren, bloetstortende overmids penitencie'.

¹¹⁹ D5: 3949/3950, E5: 3713/3714, in *ibidem*: 'i. weerdich opganc ende .i. salich offer al te verberne in minnen'.

Crucifixion,¹²⁰ where the grieving mother bows her head and closes her eyes, as if she, too, has died. With her knees about to buckle,¹²¹ she adopts a position similar to her son, whose knees also bend under the weight of his body. Like the folds of her cloak, gathered in and bunched up around her hands and face, the Virgin's sorrows have twisted her attention inward toward her heart, which burns on its own cruciform altar, pierced by the invisible sword of her Compassion.

Together, Rogier's Virgin and St. John evoke one of the most central and complicated dualities in Ruusbroec's writing – 'turning outward' and 'turning inward'. An aspiring mystic should continually fluctuate between these extremes, turning inward to contemplate the imageless unity of the Trinity and then turning outward in penance and compassionate service to God and neighbor. The two mourners in the Scheut painting would have inspired viewers to consider various aspects of this binary, including corporeal versus spiritual sight, 'sensible images' versus 'intellectual images', the human versus the divine nature of Christ, his public suffering versus his hidden Passion, and the active life versus the contemplative vocation.¹²² Ruusbroec condemns any who suppose that they can turn inward without turning outward,¹²³ and in fact, the beloved disciple and the grieving mother demonstrate traits from both modes of devotion. Standing opposite each other at the foot of the cross, they recall an important exegetical argument drawn from Ruusbroec's Eucharistic reading of the account of Zacchaeus the publican.

The mystic re-tells this scriptural narrative in the *Mirror of Eternal Blessedness* to illustrate how exemplary communicants should understand both the human and divine natures of Christ before receiving the Sacrament: 'In their turning inward with an unimaged spirit, they are elevated through bare love before the nature of the Divinity; in their turning outward, they are imaged, through heartfelt affection, unto our

¹²⁰ Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*" 193–196; Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 52.

¹²¹ Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion*" 195. Lorne Campbell, "The New Pictorial Language" 50–51, has noted that Rogier departs from convention in choosing to angle Christ's legs toward the right rather than toward the left. By doing so, Rogier aligns the body of the nearly-swooning mother with the body of her dead son, further linking their joint suffering.

¹²² For 'sensible' versus 'intellectual' images, see D5: 360/382, E5: 343/365, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D603, 605; E602, 604: 'verstendeghen beelden', 'sinleke beelden'.

¹²³ See D1429/1432, E1337/1340, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spiegel der Eeuwigher Salicheit*, D333, 335; E332, 334.

Lord's humanity'.¹²⁴ In the story, Zacchaeus, unable to see Christ because of his small stature, climbs a tree to call out to the Lord, only to promptly return to the ground at Christ's command. The mystic comments that for the faithful, who climb with the publican 'into the highest of their mind, where the spirit stands unassailed by images and unimpeded in its freedom', 'there is Jesus seen, recognized and loved in His Divinity'.¹²⁵ As if imitating St. John, they stare eagle-like into the sunburst of God's glory from a privileged vantage point high in a tree. These same devotees, however, must also attend to Christ's exhortation:

Go down quickly, for high freedom of spirit cannot keep on standing except in lowly obedience of mind. For you must know Me and love Me, as God and man: highness above all, and brought low below all [...] then I must come into your house and keep dwelling with you and in you, and you with Me and in Me.¹²⁶

Having thus lowered their heavenward gaze to the dust, like Rogier's grief-stricken Virgin, the votaries are prepared to receive Communion, repeating the liturgical response first spoken by Zacchaeus as he welcomed the Eucharistic Christ into his home, "Lord, I am not worthy, but I am unworthy that I should receive Your glorious body in the holy Sacrament in the sinful house of my body and my soul. But, Lord, have mercy on me and take pity on my poor life and all my failings".¹²⁷

In the turnings inward and outward of their postures, gazes, and souls, Rogier's St. John and the Virgin stand watch within Christ's shadow, guarding his cross, and enclosing him in a living tabernacle composed of the 'house of [their] body and [their] soul'. On another level, though, the figure of the Lord himself, lifted up and suspended for adoration at the

¹²⁴ D1263/1266, E1179/1182, in *ibidem* D317, 319; E316, 318: 'si met onghebeelden gheeste in haren inkeere, met blooeter minnen verhaven vore die natuere der godheit, ende in haren uutteere met herteleker liefden ghebeeldt toe der menscheit ons heeren'.

¹²⁵ D1292/1294, E1206/1208, in *ibidem* D321, E320: 'in dat hooeghste haerre ghedachten, daer de gheest onverbeeldt ende onghehendert in sijnre vriheit steet. Daer wert Jhesus ghesien, bekint ende ghement in sijnre godheit'.

¹²⁶ D1297/1304, E1210/1217, in *ibidem* D321, E320: "Gaet haestelec neder. Want hooeghe vriheit van gheeste en mach niet staende bliven dan in nedere ghehooersamheit van moede. Want ghi moetd mi bekinnen ende minnen god ende mensche, hoocheit boven al ende ghenedert onder al [...] dan moete ic in uwe huus comen ende woenende bliven met u ende in u, ende ghi met mi ende in mi".

¹²⁷ D1307/1311, E1219/1222, in *ibidem* D321, 323; E320, 322: "Heere, ic en ben niet weerdeghe maer ic ben onweerdegh, dat ic uwen gloriosen lichame in den heileghen sacramente ontfanen soude in dat sondeghe huus mijns lichamen ende mijnre zielen. Maer, heere, sijt mijns ghenadeghe ende ontfarme u mijns arms levens ende alle mijnre ghebreke".

culmination of his sacrifice, spurs a penultimate meditation on inward and outward devotion. It is significant that in Ruusbroec's writings both directions of the soul's turning are fueled by love, as the votary looks outward to others in charity and inward to the loving unity of the Trinity. Not surprisingly, the *Spiritual Tabernacle* tends to associate the blood pouring out of Christ's wounds with the outward-moving trajectory of his love. Yet the text's constant insistence on 'double charity' and 'double dying' suggests that this out-flowing of love may be 'doubled' by an inward-flowing aspect of Christ's charitable blood. Indeed, both sides of the binary are suffused with love in the mystic's explanation of the properties of God in the heart of the believer:

The first two properties are, by nature, flowing out, and the other two are drawing inward. God is by nature flowing out with truth and with love, and He is drawing inward with unity and with essence. The eternal truth is born of the Father. And the eternal love flows from both of them, namely from the Father and from the Son. These are the outflowing properties in God. The unity of divine nature is drawing the three Persons inward in the bond of love, and the divine essence contains the unity in emptiness, with an enjoyable embrace in essential love. These are the two inward-drawing properties in God.¹²⁸

In the Escorial *Crucifixion*, the 'inmost blood' originating in Christ's pierced heart flows *out* from his side, hands, feet, and head, coloring the cloth of honor with the dye of his battered, worm-like body. At the same time, though, the painting also invites its viewers to move *inward*, to follow that vermilion river upstream, through the wound in the Lord's side and into the sanctuary of his heart. That meditative Holy of Holies, where Christ and man meet at the Mercy Seat, is the innermost space of Ruusbroec's mystical tabernacle, the culmination of his treatise's inward-moving narrative,¹²⁹ and the vehicle by which an inward-turning mystic can share in Christ's Trinitarian unity. It is fitting that in the final pages

¹²⁸ D4: 1940/1948, E4: 1849/1857, in Ruusbroec, *Van den Geesteliken Tabernakel* D535, E534: 'Die ierste .ii. eigenscape sijn van naturen uuvloeiende ende die andere .ii. sijn intreckende. God es van naturen uuvloeiende met waerheiden ende met minnen, ende hi es intreckende met enecheyden ende met wesene. Die ewege waerheit wert gheboren ute den vader. Ende die ewege minne vliet ute hen beiden, dat es ute den vader ende ute den sone. Dit sijn die uuvloeiende eigenscape in gode. Die enecheyt godleker naturen es intreckende die .iii. persone in bande van minnen ende dat godleke wesen beveet die enecheyt in ledecheyden met enen gebrukeleken ommevange in weseleker minnen. Dit sijn twee intreckende eigenscape in gode'.

¹²⁹ In contrast to the text in Exodus, Ruusbroec details the spaces and materials of the tabernacle from the exterior to the interior and from the bottom to the top. See Mertens,

of the *Spiritual Tabernacle*, Ruusbroec writes that the golden cherubim protecting the Ark of the Covenant embody 'the loving spirit in its highest nobility, where it belongs entirely and totally to the love of God, in an emptiness of itself'.¹³⁰

To conclude this essay, I would like to return to the devotional exercise of gazing, as prompted by both Rogier and Ruusbroec. Each day, the Carthusian monks of Our Lady of Grace would have focused intently on the Host and chalice, straining their spiritual vision to look past the accidentals of bread and wine in order to perceive the Real Presence of God, in much the way that St. John looks beyond and to the side of the broken body of Christ to behold his divinity. This is also St. Longinus' line of vision, who, newly healed from blindness, suddenly recognizes the Son of God in the crucified man before him. In a similar manner, Ruusbroec's exegetical texts would have aided the Carthusians to perceive profound meanings in the subtle gestures of Rogier's mourners, the somber foregrounding of the Lord's side wound, and the shimmering, jewel-like pool of 'twice-dyed' vermillion. The 'demi-grisaille' figures may have resolved more readily from fictive sculpture into living flesh when the monks recalled Ruusbroec's litany of other metamorphosing elements as types for transubstantiation: the Nile turning to blood, Lot's wife changing into a pillar of salt, and the stream pouring forth from the rock in the Exodus.¹³¹ Gazing at the panel, the Carthusians may have pondered Christ's Eucharistic entrance into the Old Testament Holy of Holies to celebrate the Christian mass with his own blood, and in a complementary way, they may have reflected on his sacramental presence in the spiritual tabernacle of their own hearts.

"Introduction", in *ibidem* I 24, 34–35; D2: 13/18, E2: 13/17, in *ibidem* D279, E278; D2: 51/52, E2: 50/51, in *ibidem* D283, E282.

¹³⁰ D6: 314/316, E6: 298/300, in *ibidem* D1293, E1292: 'den minnenden gheeste eyghen sijn in sijnre hoechster edelheit, daer hi der ewegher minnen gods gheheel es ende al in eenre ledicheit sijns selfs'.

¹³¹ See D682/689, E641/648, in Ruusbroec, *Een Spieghel der Eeuwigher Salicheit* D261, E260.

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HELENUS AND DOROTHEUS:
MARTEN DE VOS AND THE DESERT FATHERS

Leopoldine van Hogendorp Prosperetti

A hermit's hut. What a subject for an engraving!
Gaston Bachelard

Prints have been the catalysts for new categories of *imagines exegeticae*. Marten de Vos (1532–1603), painter and draftsman in Antwerp, was a prolific inventor of prints and print series that link profuse imagery to terse captions and prod the viewer to compound what he discovers in the word–image interchange into a fresh reaffirmation of a spiritual truth. The majority of his exegetical prints were based on Scripture, while others took their allegorical subjects from Christian philosophy and natural theology, branches of Christian instruction (*doctrina*) that tap into Nature as God's first book of revelation. Most innovative are his poetical portraits of holy men and women, who found in the desert a new way of life. This essay on the origins of this extremely popular print series will reveal that Marten de Vos and his team approached the invention of these 'eremitical idylls' from a well-established hermeneutics of desert piety.¹ The case to be made in each single print was to show that *solitudo* as a form of life promises to turn a wilderness into a flowery meadow, a squalid hut into an attractive hermitage, and the uncouth anchorite into an angel of the desert.

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¹ The best introduction to desert piety as a branch of the contemplative life is Petrarch's *De vita solitaria*, which constitutes an archive of the eremitical tradition and inspired many generations of Christians to 'migrate into the wilderness' in order to find the consolations of divine love. For the Latin text, see Petrarca F., *De vita solitaria*, in *Opere Latine*, ed. A. Bufano, 2 vols. (Turin: 1975). For a bilingual edition, see Petrarca F., *De vita solitaria*, ed. M. Noce (Milan: 1992). For a critical edition of book 1, see Enenkel K., *Petrarca Francesco, De vita solitaria. Buch I: Kritische Textausgabe und Ideengeschichtlicher Kommentar*, Leidse Romantische Reeks 24 (Leiden – New York – Cologne – Copenhagen: 1990).

*Helenus and Dorotheus:
Two Drawings by the Flemish Artist Marten de Vos*

In 1585 Marten de Vos created the first of a large number of drawings representing the Fathers and the Mothers of the Desert. Comprising 132 separate compositions, the group includes both the men and women who pursued the godly life in the deserts of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, and the hermits and anchoresses who followed their example in the bleak wildernesses and dense forests of Western Europe [Fig. 1].² Showing a hermit in a sylvan retreat, this drawing inaugurates a unique assemblage of eremitical imagery that is familiar on one hand (it reminds us of innumerable pictures of Jerome in the wilderness) yet is unique in its line-up of hermits of obscure origins and often with very peculiar names, such as Palamon and Spiridon. In the present sheet, it is Helenus from the Thebaid who enjoys the fragrance of a fresh herb collected from the plants that line a limpid stream.³ The scene is evocative of a famous line in Early Christian poetry, which proclaims that for the anchorites, 'their viands are the wild roots and herbs, their drink the torrent'.⁴ Behind him looms his cabin. It is a ramshackle hut composed of branches and thatch, its ridgepole resting on the forked limbs of a blasted tree. In the back two untrimmed branches frame a gable, a rustic pediment from which to hang a bell. Nearby in a sandy hollow, a fellow hermit sits in a barrel that has been converted into a rustic shelter. The tops of lush trees, wafting in a breeze, complete what could be called an eremitical idyll, its scenery, habitat, and the action of the hermit designed purposefully to invite the viewer to become a votary of the solitary life.

The Helenus *modello* is the first sign that a massive project had been launched. The date on another drawing, 1597, shows that twelve years later

² Reinsch A., *Die Zeichnungen des Marten de Vos: Stilistische und ikonographische Untersuchungen*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Eberhard-Karls-Universität, Tübingen: 1967) 130, note 69,4.

³ The Thebaid is 'the Holy Land of Piety' in Egypt, which flourished during the Late Roman Empire. Pilgrims from all parts of the Mediterranean world came to visit the Desert Fathers who had settled in Egypt since the days of Paul, the first hermit (d. 113) and Saint Anthony Abbot (ca. 251–356), the founder of Christian monasticism. In subsequent literature the word 'thebaid' became synonymous with any place of exile or solitude.

⁴ Digby K., *Compitum or the Meeting of the Ways at the Catholic Church*, 7 vols. (London: 1849) VII 58. The author cites Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373), the great hymnographer of the Eastern Church.



Fig. 1. Marten de Vos, *Helenus* (1585). The name of Franciscus a Paulo was added erroneously in the 19th century. Pen and brown ink, with gray wash, 15.9 × 21.1 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (79 B 17, 69,4). Image©Kupferstichkabinett.

Marten de Vos was still composing new additions to what turned out to be a major hagiographical undertaking [Fig. 2]. The subject is Dorotheus of Gaza, the Egyptian monk who built stone huts in the unremitting heat of the coastal strip of Gaza and stayed awake during the night weaving baskets. The emphasis here is on the harshness of the desert and the role of crafts in the sustenance of Holy Men, who earn their livelihood twisting fibers into rope, weaving palm fronds into bedrolls, and plying cane into baskets.

An Album in Berlin

Of Marten de Vos's 132 designs for this project only 24 have survived and nine carry a date. Twenty were gathered in a paperboard album in Berlin with the title, "Darstellung der Lebensweise verschiedener Heiligen,

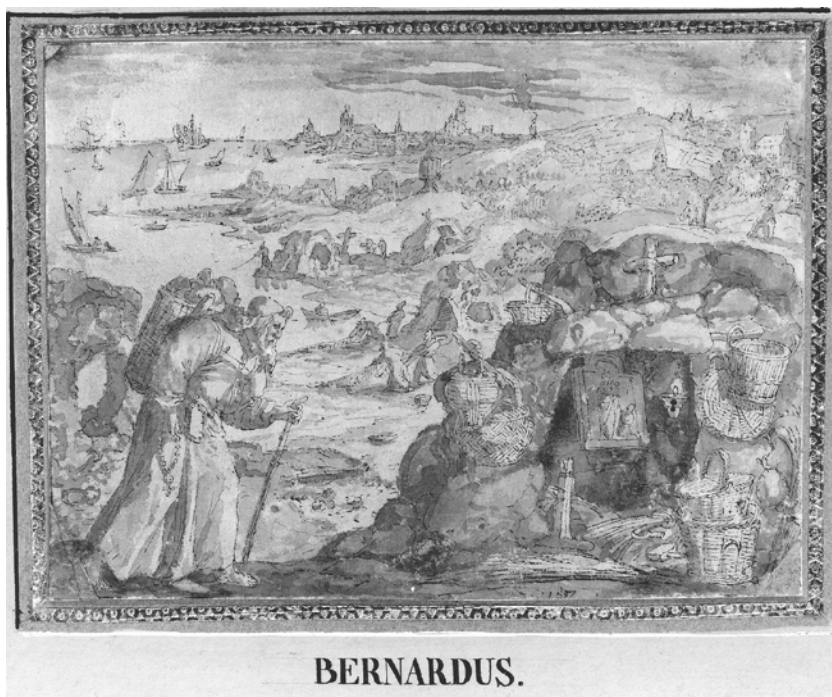


Fig. 2. Marten de Vos, *Dorotheus* (1597). The name Bernardus was added erroneously in the 19th century. Pen and brown ink, with gray wash, 14.8 × 19.8 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (79 B 17, 69,9). Image©Kupferstichkabinett.

gezeichnet von Marten de Vos in den Jahren 1586 bis 1597" ("Representation of the Way of Life of Several Saints, Drawn by Marten de Vos in the Years 1586 to 1597").⁵ The anonymous collector who pasted the *modelli* into this album also provided names, but none is correct. Helenus, for example, is identified as St. Francis of Paola.⁶ Adelheid Reinsch, who published the Berlin drawings, was the first to connect the drawing to the print of Helenus in the Sadeler set (I 10).⁷ However she was mistaken in her belief that Helenus was the same as Helanus, an Irish saint from Merovingian times. We will show that all the fathers in the *Solitudo* series were in fact true Desert Fathers (*cultores eremi*) from the rocky wildernesses of Egypt,

⁵ Winner M., *Pieter Bruegel als Zeichner: Herkunft und Nachfolge* (Berlin: 1975) 182, note 286.

⁶ St. Francis of Paola (1416–1507) was the founder of the Hermits of St. Francis, later the Order of the Minims.

⁷ Reinsch, *Zeichnungen* 130, n. 69,4. 'I 10' indicates the album and number of a print. Helenus is found in album I, plate 10.

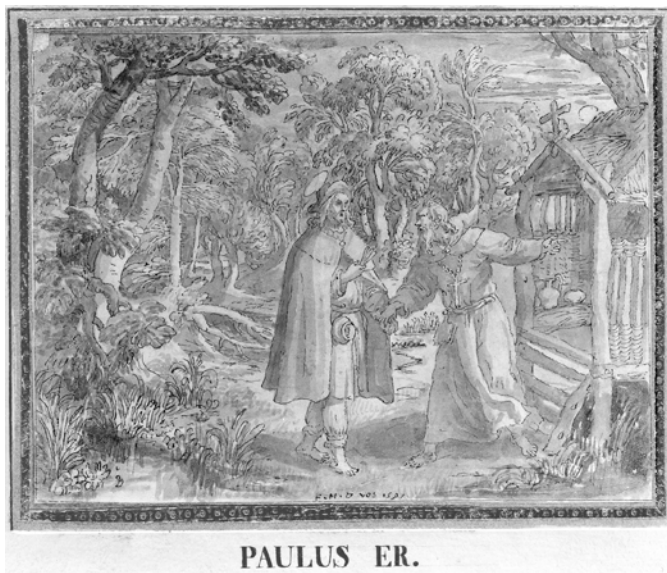


Fig. 3. Marten de Vos, *Ethbinus* (1587). The name Paulus Er. was added erroneously in the 19th century. Pen and brown ink, with gray wash, 15.7 × 20.3 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (79 B 17, 69,2). Image©Kupferstichkabinett.

Palestine, and Syria.⁸ Their exotic Coptic names are found in the ten books of the *Vitae Patrum*, the omnibus for the lives and sayings of the ascetics of the East which, in various redactions and compilations, was a fixed item in the libraries of Europe's monasteries.⁹ Heribert Rosweyde's publication of a rigorously edited post-medieval edition in 1615 made the *Vitae Patrum* more widely available, but we must remember that it postdates the prints. Nor does it contain the many non-Eastern hermits who begin to appear in the second set of the series, which its publishers, the Sadelers from Antwerp, entitled *Sylvae Sacrae* (*Sacred Woods*), as if to indicate the geographical expansion from the wastelands of the Thebaid in Egypt into the leafy wildernesses of medieval Europe. Instead of Helenus, *cultor*

⁸ On the Desert Fathers, see Brown P., "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1972) 80–101. On the unfamiliarity of the Eastern Holy Fathers to Western Europeans, see Partridge L., "Discourse of Asceticism in Bertoja's Room of Penitence in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola", *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 40 (1995) 145–174.

⁹ On the *Vitae Patrum*, see Waddell H., *The Desert Fathers* (Ann Arbor: 1957). On the writings of the Desert Fathers, see Harmless W., *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford: 2004). For the 1615 edition of the *Vitae Patrum* and an English translation, see <http://www/vitae-patrum.org.uk/page2.html>.



Fig. 4. Johannes Sadeler I and Raphael Sadeler after Marten de Vos, Title-Print, *Solitudo sive vitae patrum* (ca. 1587). Engraving, ca. 28 × 36 cm. Pitts Theological Library at Emory University. Image©libmpg@emory.edu.

thebaidis, we now encounter Ethbinus, *natus in Britannia minori* (IV 15), and many others who accumulated spiritual trophies in the deciduous forests of Western Europe [Fig. 3].

The Theme of 'Solitudo'

The title print of the first installment of plates, *Solitudo sive vitae patrum eremicorum* (*Solitude or the Lives of the Hermit Fathers*) equates solitude with the Desert Fathers [Fig. 4].¹⁰ *Solitudo* is the Latin form of *eremos*, the Greek word for an empty wilderness, which is also the lexical form for words such as eremitical, hermit, and hermitage.¹¹ For Petrarch, who instructed literate Europe on the benefits of the solitary life, 'solitude'

¹⁰ Schuckman C. (comp.), *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700. Volume 46: Maarten de Vos*, ed. D. de Hoop Scheffer, 2 parts (Amsterdam: 1949–1988) II 69, plate 974. For large images of all 132 prints but without the didascalia, see Pitts Theological Library – Digital Image Archive: <http://www.pitts.emory.edu/dia/>.

¹¹ Lampe G., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: 1961) 68, s.v. 'eremus'. *Eremus*, desert, and wilderness were used interchangeably as synonyms for the solitary life. The exhortatory sentiment, 'to migrate into the wilderness', occurs in the writings from St. Augustine to Erasmus and many others, who used it as a trope for engaging the soul in making the spiritual journey. Cf. Leclercq J., "Eremus et eremite. Pour l'histoire du vocabulaire de la vie solitaire", in *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorem* 25 (1963) 8–30.

was a way of life that can be studied in three ways: first, by comparing it with its opposite, life at court or in the city with its vanities and miseries; second, by considering the places where it is cultivated (the Thebaid, Tivoli, or a retreat of one's own making); third, by studying its champions, the heroes of the desert, identified by Saint Jerome and others as the 'athletes of God'.¹² Petrarch's list of exemplars of the solitary life begins with none other than Dorotheus and concludes with Christ. Widely read in the Low Countries, Petrarch's 'literary Thebaid' might well have been an antecedent for our print series, collecting in similar fashion the heroes of the anachoretic tradition.¹³

The title print further informs us that 'the lives of the fathers were once gathered and described ('conscripta') by the most ancient St. Jerome, and are now, for the first time, carved into copper plates at great expense by Johannes and Raphael Sadeler'.¹⁴ The Sadelers (Johannes 1550–1600 and Raphael 1561–1628), were Flemings, members of a dynasty of engravers and print publishers, trained in Antwerp, and admired across Europe for their technical skill and wide range of subject matter, including the highly original scenes of hermitage that are the topic of this paper.¹⁵

Solitudo was issued without revealing place or date, but 1587 is a likely date, and Frankfurt a likely place. *Sylvae Sacrae* ("Sacred Woods") appeared in Munich in 1594. The final sets, one named *Trophaeum vitae solitaria* ("Throphies of the Solitary Life"), and the other *Oraculum Anachoreticum* ("Anachorite Oracles"), were published in Venice, respectively in 1598 and 1600.¹⁶ Marten de Vos added 32 drawings treating the Desert Mothers, published in Antwerp in ca. 1594.¹⁷ The printer of the fifth album was no longer one of the Sadelers, but Adriaen Collaert, the head of yet another printing dynasty. All in all, the Antwerp master was responsible for 132 portrayals of historically known solitaries for five different albums that would be sold across Europe to ecclesiastical and lay clients alike.

¹² Petrarca, *De vita solitaria*, ed. Noce 142–351. To compare the ascetic life with athleticism is a commonplace in the literature of the desert.

¹³ Ibidem 142–143. On admiration for Petrarch's prose works in the North, see Enenkel K., "Der anderer Petrarca: Francesco Petrarca *De vita solitaria* und die Devotio Moderna," *Quaerendo* 17 (1987) 137–147.

¹⁴ *Solitudo sive vitae patrum Eremicolarum per antiquissimi Patrem D. Hieronymi eorumdem primarium olim conscripta: iam vero primum aeneis laminis; ideoque Ioannis et Raphael SADERLER fratri impensis scalp. & excusa.*

¹⁵ For a recent account on the Sadeler series, see Vignau-Wilberg T., "Eremiten und Einsiedeleien: Bilder zur Einkehr und Erbauung / Hermits and Hermitages: Images for Contemplation and Edification", in *In Europa zu hause- Niederländer in München um 1600 / Citizens of Europe: Dutch and Flemish Artists in Munich c. 1600* (Munich: 2005) 365–402.

¹⁶ Schuckman (comp.), *New Hollstein: Maarten de Vos*, ed. De Hoop Scheffer, nos. 921/11, 964, 994, 1024, 1050.

¹⁷ Ibidem, nos. 921/11–945/11.

A Virtual Museum of Religious Men

The hermits were a pan-European success. Seventeenth-century art critics were unanimous in their praise for the series' force of invention.¹⁸ Giacomo Cavacci (1567–1612), a Benedictine monk and historian from Padua, wrote that a convolute of all five series constituted a 'Praise' ('Elogia') of illustrious anchorites; he considered the collection 'a virtual museum of religious men'. Cavacci acknowledged the role of De Vos as the mastermind of the images and referred to the Sadeler brothers as sharp cutters of the plates. 'Italy was an eager recipient of the prints', he wrote, 'and appreciative of the variety of landscapes, some extremely lovely, others truly horrid, some embellished with forest and rocks, others with rivers and visions of the sea, a variety of views that should bring the mind immense enjoyment'.¹⁹ This appreciation for the variety of the prints' lonely places did not abate over time. Philip Hainofer of Augsburg (1578–1647) commented that the actual hermitages he encountered in Bavaria looked as if they had been copied from copper paintings and from the prints (viz., by the Sadelers) portraying the fathers or hermits. Years later in England, Horace Walpole (1753) was delighted to find in the scenery of Hagley Park, a 'hermitage, so exactly like those in the Sadeler prints'.²⁰ On the eve of the Romantic Era, Goethe still found much to admire in the harmonies between hermit, habitat, and scenery in the Sadeler prints.²¹

1585–1600: The Origins and Originality of a Remarkable Project

The success of the hermit prints is undeniable, but what is truly rewarding about the prints is their originality. Almost every print is a fresh invention, balancing the illustration of a way of life with a poetic supplement

¹⁸ Baglione Giovanni, *Le vite de' pittori scultori ed architetti dal Pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572 in fine a'tempi di Urbano Ottavo nel 1642* (Rome, Andrea Fei: 1642) 387–389; Ridolfi Carlo, *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, 2 vols. (Venice, Giovanni Battista Sgava: 1648) II 75; Sandrart Joachim, *Teutsche Akademie*, 3 vols. (Nuremberg, J. von Sandrart; Frankfurt, M. Meriam: 1675) III 242.

¹⁹ Cavacci Giacomo, *Illustrium Anachoretarum elogia* (Padua, Monaco Benedictino Congregationis Casinensis: 1612) A2. Cavacci's book was illustrated with prints drawn from a new set of plates, cut by Francesco Valesio from Bologna, which changed the orientation of the original Sadeler plates from horizontal to vertical.

²⁰ For Walpole's citation, see Ost H., *Einsiedler und Mönche in der deutschen Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Dusseldorf: 1971) 49.

²¹ Ost, *Einsiedler* 53. On hermitages in Georgian England, see Campbell, G., *The Hermit in the Garden: From Imperial Rome to Ornamental Gnome* (Oxford: 2013).

that contains a kernel of truth about the desert experience. These are the elegiac carmina (sets of couplets in the meter of pastoral elegy) that accompany each of the prints. In the case of the print of Helenus, the verse explains that he 'gathers a frugal meal' [Fig. 5]. Dorotheus leads a sleepless life weaving the leaves of palms [Fig. 6]. This is not the rehashing of familiar materials, as one might find in series of biblical prints or mythological imagery but rather, the forging of brand-new word-image constructs worthy of the best of the scriptural emblem-books that were then coming into fashion. Each single invention leaves us with the question, how was it conceived, who formulated its subject? Who took the initiative in assembling a multitude of hermits in so novel a manner? We imagine a team of producers, including the Sadeler brothers, Marten de Vos, and perhaps an advisor with hagiographical expertise. The artistic *modus operandi* is highly methodical, as one would expect from an artist as disciplined as Marten de Vos. He established a pictorial formula with three fixed elements: a vital figure, expressive scenery, and an ingeniously contrived hermitage. For instance, in the print of Ethbinus we admire the impetuosity of the hermit offering hospitality, the *fragor frondium* ('sound of leaves') of an enchanted forest, and the humble cottage ingeniously fashioned from wattles of willow branches [Fig. 3].²² But who supplied the identity of an obscure hermit such as Ethbinus, and by what channels of exchange did the Antwerp painter and the peripatetic printmakers manage the process from concept to publication?²³ These are questions that need to be answered if we want to take a full measure of this unprecedented project.

De Vos's inventions converted the textual *vita* into a spiritual image that directs the viewer to consider the benefits of the solitary life lived in a hermitage of one's own making. It was again Petrarch who initiated the aesthetic of an *amabile secretum* ('charming retreat'). 'Let us go to that place', he urges in *De vita solitaria*, 'where curtains of trailing vines with their pendant knots climbing the sustaining reedy rods have constructed a portico of vines, a roof of branches. There you have the porch, there you

²² The reference is to the image with which Petrarch concludes *De vita solitaria*: 'Omnis impulsarum vento frondium fragor et omnis circa nascentium sonitus aquarum [...]'. On this and related passages, see Maggi A., "You will be my solitude: Solitude as Prophecy", in Kirkham V. (ed.), *Petrarch: A Critical Guide* (Chicago: 2009) 179–196.

²³ During the twelve years that elapsed between the *modelli* of Helenus and Dorotheus, Marten de Vos lived and worked in Antwerp, while the Sadeler brothers, part-time residents of Antwerp after 1577–78 and expatriates by 1587, moved further and further away from their native city, living in Cologne, Frankfurt and Munich before settling in Venice in 1595.



Fig. 5. Johannes Sadeler after Marten de Vos, *Helenus* (ca. 1587). Engraving, ca. 28 × 36 cm. Pitts Theological Library at Emory University. Image@libmpg@emory.edu



Fig. 6. Raphael Sadeler after Marten de Vos, *Dorotheus* (1600). Engraving, ca. 28 × 36 cm. Pitts Theological Library at Emory University. Image@libmpg@emory.edu

have the spot which the holy and eloquent man sought. Vines, vine-shoots, leafy branches, and canes, that's where we find the scholar's beloved amiable retreat'.²⁴ The vocabulary of Virgil's *Eclogues*, eagerly appropriated by Petrarch for his *amabile secretum*, is endlessly varied by De Vos in the microarchitecture of his hermitages. Here live the rugged managers of the solitary life who must tame luxury, wage war with demons, stick to an austere diet, and never waver from the principle of self-sufficiency that obliges them to build simple huts and fashion humble artifacts. It is the novelty not only of the series as a whole, but of each separate *vita* that makes the prints truly exceptional, even audacious if one considers that in 1585 the credibility of the cult of saints was hotly contested?²⁵

Helenus and Dorotheus

We have admired De Vos's drawings of Helenus and Dorotheus. Let us now briefly study the prints and the verses that accompany them [Fig. 4].

Mundities HELENVM stimulavit pectoris omnem
 Ut fugeret naevum corporis atque animi
 Sola loca incoluit gelido contermina fonti
 Deinde herbis carpsit parca alimenta sibi.

Cleanliness of the heart spurred Helenus to flee
 Every stain of body and soul.
 He lived in lonely places along the borders of a frigid spring
 Hence he gathered for himself a frugal meal of herbs.

The *carmen* pairs *mundities*, cleanliness, with the darkness of a stain. *Naevus* is often used with great effect by Horace and his fellow satirists (including St. Jerome) to point out that no mortal is ever perfect.²⁶ The remaining lines evoke the *locus amoenus*, an idyllic spot made complete

²⁴ Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* 100–101. Note that *porticus* (porch) is a byword for the Stoics who expounded their philosophy in the painted colonnade on the north side of the agora in ancient Athens.

²⁵ The focus on the Desert Fathers may have been an attempt on the part of the producers to find a middle ground between the cult of the saints (fraught with idolatry) and the cult of 'solitudo' (neutral in its insistence on asceticism). The latter rapidly became the vehicle for a pan-European aesthetics that would eventually unite culturally a continent that had been ravaged by religious wars.

²⁶ The *locus classicus* for 'simplex mundities' is Horace, *Odes* I 6. On Jerome as satirist, see Wiesen D., *St. Jerome as Satirist: A Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letters* (Ithaca: 1964) 112.

by the enjoyment of a frugal repast freely provided by nature. *Parca alimenta* ('thrifty sustenance') is the main point of the verse, which purveys instruction worth imitating: votaries of the solitary life must adhere to the *diaeta ascetica* that keeps nutrition to a bare minimum. The literature of the desert is replete with feats of extreme fasting, beginning with Jerome's tale of Hilarion, whose career as an ascetic was measured by the severity of his diet, and who at one point subsisted 'on wild herbs and raw roots of certain bushes'.²⁷

How different is the story of Dorotheus, born in the Thebaid, who labored in the unremitting heat of the coastal strip of Gaza!²⁸ It is not cleanliness but squalor that defines his life.²⁹ He is presented as the indefatigable collector of stones, to be used for the construction of hostels for the pilgrims of the Late Empire. In the image he strides purposefully to his squalid cave, a basket heavy with stones strapped to his back. Behind him stretches a coastal panorama, supposedly the seaside of Palestine, but which, as it recedes toward the horizon, increasingly takes on the look of a northern European estuarial landscape, leading the eye to the tall steeple of the fair city of Antwerp.³⁰ The verse in the margin uses mythological imagery to describe a typical day in the life of Dorotheus, physical labor during the day, weaving of palm fronds at night.

Dorothei Longos vidisti Phoebe labores;
Dorothei assiduum Cynthia videt opus
Saxa die gestans, peregrinis tecta locabat.
Nocturnus, palmas texere, somnus erat.

Oh Sun, you saw the long labors of Dorotheus;
By night Diana sees Dorotheus's uninterrupted work.
By day he lugs stones to lay the roofs of travelers;
His nightly sleep consisted of weaving palm fronds.

²⁷ Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis*, chapter 6, in *Vitae Patrum*, Book 1 (<http://www/vitae-patrum.org.uk/page2.html>). On the topic of food and monasticism, see Jotischky A., *A Hermit's Cookbook: Monks, Food, and Fasting* (New York: 2011).

²⁸ Dorotheus exercises what scholars have called *Wanderaskese*. Victims of their own success, the Fathers often found themselves so hemmed in by fellow hermits, that it became imperative to move further into the wilderness to regain true solitude.

²⁹ Wheeler E., *Dorotheos of Gaza: Discourses and Sayings* (Kalamazoo: 1977).

³⁰ This kind of landscape, in fact, had been perfected by Pieter Bruegel, and we find it incorporated in De Vos's catalogue of all the different types of landscape that had been developed in the course of the 16th century. Helenus, it should be noted, is also situated in a landscape that has nothing to do with wastelands of the Thebaid, but reflects the sylvan glades that were becoming fashionable as a type of landscape in the Protestant communities along the Rhine, and in the art of Gillis van Coninxloo.

There is an epigrammatic force in the final line: 'Palmas texere, somnus erat' ('His form of sleep was making baskets'). It supplies the viewer with a succinct statement, a motto if you will, that underlines the doctrine of industry in solitude.³¹ De Vos elaborates on the poet's conceit in his invention of a still life of basketry, an overproduction of wicker containers, as if to underscore Dorotheus's nightlong labors. Various tools and a sheaf of palm fronds turn the still life into a virtual treatise on the humble craft of wickerwork. The motif of basketry highlights the principle of autarky. In order to be self-sufficient the Fathers make good use of all sorts of vegetal material, whether thatch, willow branches, or palm fronds.

As the prints circulated in large numbers, often in the form of plagiarized editions, it became apparent that the image/carmen construction was too cryptic for some viewers. Clarification was duly offered by Georges Garnefelt, a Carthusian from the Low Countries, who spent his life in the grand library of the Charterhouse in Cologne.³² There he composed his *Elucidationes sacrae in quinque libros de imaginibus antiquorum eremitarum* (*Sacred Clarifications on the Five Books of the Ancient Hermit*) published in Cologne in 1621. It is under his guidance that we shall come better to understand the hagiographical importance of the hermit prints.

*Garnefelt's Elucidations*³³

In addition to clarifying all five books of the hermit prints, the *Elucidationes* turns out to be a very useful handbook on solitary saints from the days of the Apostles to the beginning of the Reformation [Fig. 7]. The page-long elucidations on each of the 132 prints constitute the centerpiece of the work, which assumes that the reader has the plates at hand. The book calls upon Christians continuously to increase the canon of solitaires by collecting their biographies.³⁴ It also urges artists to consult their *armarium* ('bookchest') when given the task of depicting them, and invites poets to step forward and illustrate the saints with their verses.³⁵

³¹ For an introduction to *acedia* (spiritual sloth), see Waddell, *Desert Fathers*, 157–162.

³² Sometimes spelled Garnefeld. Little is known about this learned Carthusian from Cologne.

³³ Garnefelt Georg, *Elucidationes sacrae in quinque libros de imaginibus antiquorum eremitarum* (Cologne, Antonius Boetzerus: 1621).

³⁴ Garnefelt, *Elucidationes sacrae* 2–3.

³⁵ *Ibidem* 229–231.

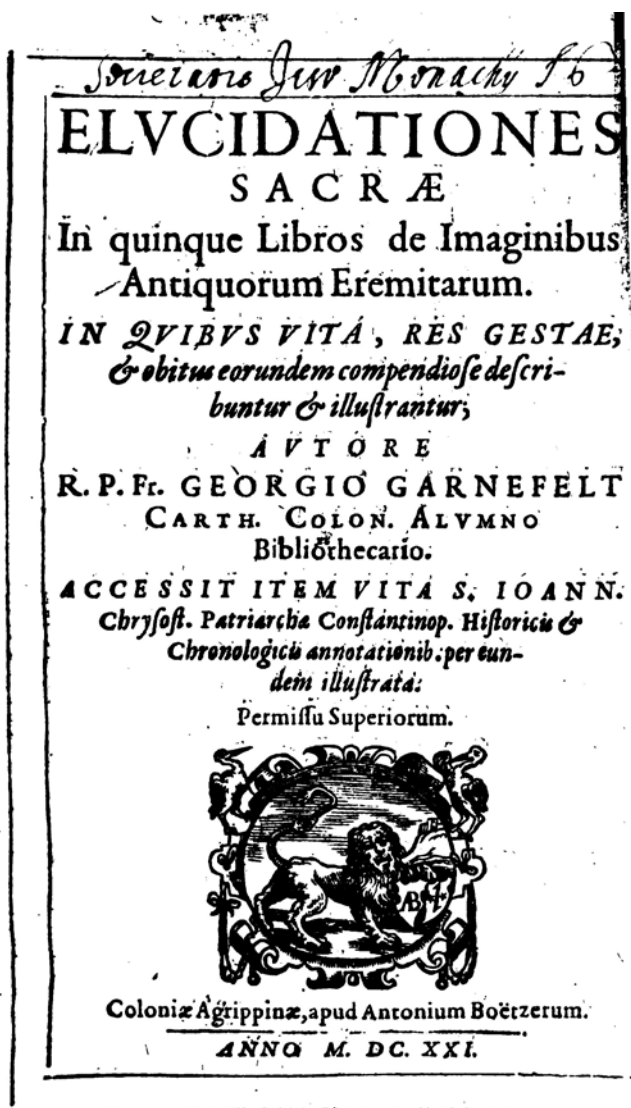


Fig. 7. Georg Garnefelt, Title-Page, *Elucidationes sacrae in quinque libros de imaginibus antiquorum eremitarum* (Cologne, Antonius Boetzerus: 1621). Die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (Sig. V.ss.c.88).

As a Carthusian in Cologne, Garnefelt worked in the same place where Laurentius Surius (1522–1578) had labored over the *De probatis sanctorum historiis* (1570–1577). This is the new and improved compendium of the saints that took the place of the by then discredited *Legenda aurea* by Jacopo da Voragine [Fig. 8].³⁶ Surius was a close friend of Petrus Canisius (1521–1597), the mastermind of Catholic Reform in Lower Germany. Both men were drawn to the Charterhouse, as much for its purity of lifestyle as its library, and they made it the intellectual hub of the campaign to return the Church to an unblemished orthodoxy.³⁷ The task at hand was to counter the Protestant critique of monasticism and the ascetic life with a stream of scholarly publications that looked at the old legends through the lens of Cesare Baronius's new historiography. Garnefelt's commitment to the historical method and his efforts to promote the lives of these obscure solitaires, and to situate them among the great multitude of saints ('innumerabiles in coelo'), fit into Baronius's program of Christian scholarship.³⁸

Garnefelt's Method

In his preface, Garnefelt alternates praise with criticism. The prints offer useful and honest delight to pious people, but they are also poorly understood, and only a few appreciate how they pertain to the lives of the anchorites. For that reason he has been asked to treat the prints historically and provide the avid viewer with greater knowledge. After all, there is no more pleasurable labor for the 'religious solitary' ('religioso solitario') than to ponder the lives of the hermits and the histories of the saints. Even if it is true (and there is no greater truth), that images are the books for laymen and the illiterate, what viewer would not welcome some explanation.³⁹

Extremely useful to help navigate the print albums is his alphabetical index, which precedes the *Elucidationes* [Fig. 8]. Organized into six tables, it offers vital information about each saint. Here are the headings of each column:

³⁶ Surius Laurentius, *De probatis sanctorum historiis ab Al. Lipomano olim conscriptis nunc primum a Laur. Surio emendatis et auctis* (Cologne, Gervinus Calenius: 1570–1577).

³⁷ On the spiritual crisis, see Smith J.C., *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton: 2002).

³⁸ Garnefelt, *Elucidationes sacrae* 2.

³⁹ Ibidem 2–5.

INDEX.	
INDEX ALPHA	
REMITIS: IN QVO SIMVL ANNVS, QVO VEL OBIERVNT, MORTVALIS; AVTHORES DENIQVE conſcripſerunt, vno intuitu conſpi conditioq; & quicquid ad per	
Remiſſio ad I- cones.	Nomina, patria, ſtatu, conditioque perſonarum.
Lib. I. n. 4.	Abraham, Syru, nuprias repndiat.
L. 2. n. 20.	Aegydiu, Graeco Athenienſis.
L. 3. n. 11.	Alferius, i. Abbas Cauenſis Neap.
L. 5. n. 17.	Amata, qua 80. ann. fuit in aſceterio.
L. 2. n. 19.	Amatus, Gratianopolitanuſ, prebyster.
L. 1. n. 26.	Ammon, cultor Niſtriae eremi.
L. 3. n. 3.	Antiochus, centenarius ſenex.
L. 1. n. 2.	Antoninuſ Magnus, Pater Monachoru.
L. 3. n. 22.	Antoniuſ de Padua, Franciſcanuſ.
L. 1. n. 24.	Anub, vel Anuph Thebaidu cultor.
L. 1. n. 17.	Apelles, faber Ferrariuſ, Prebyster.
L. 1. n. 8.	Apolloniuſ, Thebaidu cultor.
L. 3. n. 12.	Arnulphus, ex Epifcopo Metenſi.
In Sy-	

INDEX.			
BETICVS PRO E- LOCVS, VBI VIXERVNT; VEL FLORVERVNT; DIES E- ORIGENARI, QVI EORVNDEN VITAS ciuntur. Indicatur etiam patria, ſtatus ſonarum qualitatem ſpectat.			
Locuſ in quo habita- runt.	Annus Chriſti quo vel ob. vel flor.	Dies, quo mortui ſunt.	Auſtores qui geſta ſcripſe- runt.
In Syria.	337.	16. Mart.	Surim.
In P. Narbon.	514.	1. Septemb.	Lippeloo.
In Sicilia.	1040.	12. Apr.	Surim.
In Aegypto.	388.	.....	Palladius.
In Gallia.	617.	13. Sept.	Surim.
In Aegypto.	337.	.....	Palladius c. 8.
In Oriente.	597.	.....	Sur. 2. Apr.
In Aegypto.	358.	17. Ian.	Surim.
In Italia.	1231.	13. Iun.	Surim.
In Aegypto.	360.	.....	Ruff. c. 10.
In Thebaida.	373.	.....	Ruff. c. 15.
In Aegypto.	373.	.....	Ruffinuſ c. 7.
In Gallia.	640.	16. Aug.	Surim.
In Aeg-			

Fig. 8. Georg Garnefelt, "Index alphabeticus pro eremitis", in idem, *Elucidationes sacrae in quinque libros de imaginibus antiquorum eremitarum* (Cologne, Antonius Boetzerus: 1621). Die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (Sig. V.ss.c.88).

1. *Remissio ad Icones* refers to the location of the saint in the print series.
2. *Nomina, patria, status, conditioque personarum* lists the name of each father, adding his place of birth, social or ecclesiastical rank, and particular merit.
3. *Locum in quo habiterent* gives the geographical place where he lived.
4. *Annus Christi quo vel. ob. vel. Flor* enumerates the year of his death, or time when he was active.
5. *Dies in quo mortui sunt* gives the *dies emortualis* or the day of death.
6. *Autores qui gesta scripserunt* names the authors who commemorated their deeds in their writings.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Garnefelt, *Elucidationes sacrae* 3-4.

Looking up Helenus yields the following information. His print is to be found in Liber 1, n. 10. He is one of the *cultores thebaidi*, an inhabitant of the Thebaid, where the hermits first settled. He died in the year 360 on the 17th of April. His story is found in *Ruff. II*. This last piece of information is precious, because it finally directs us to the place in the *Vitae Patrum* that is directly related to the print.⁴¹ *Ruff. II* is short for chapter 11 in the *History of the Monks of Egypt*, which bishop Rufinus of Aquileia translated from Greek into Latin, and which is included as Book 2 of the *Vitae Patrum*. Here we read of a holy man named Helenus, who is also discussed in Palladius, chapter 59, where he is called Hellen.⁴² Palladius is the author of the *Lausiaca History*, another compilation of Eastern monks, the Latin translation of which became Book 8 in the *Vitae Patrum*.⁴³ In both places, the inventors of the Helenus print would have read of his continence and of his refusal to eat luscious food, such as honey and apples, which the devil lay like snares in his path. Instead he followed the voice of an angel commanding him to get up and eat, without worry, whatever he would find placed before him: 'He got up and found a gently flowing stream of water, with its banks teeming all around with tender and sweet-smelling fruits. He went up to them and picked and ate, and drank from the stream. He realized that never in his whole life had he tasted anything quite so sweet and delicious'.⁴⁴ Here we have the hagiographical material that the masterminds of the Solitudo series reconfigured into a "Monument of Solitudo" by paraphrasing the text and illustrating Helenus's enjoyment of a simple plant, as if it were angelic food.

This kind of exegesis is implicit in the subjects inscribed on the title pages of the print series, the texts of which Garnefelt reproduces in his treatise.⁴⁵ The lives of the twenty-nine hermits in Book 1 illustrate the topic of solitude. In the Sacred Woods of Book 2 the title print presents

⁴¹ Garnefelt, *Elucidationes sacrae* A5; on Rufinus, see Waddell, *Desert Fathers* 40–57. For Rosweyde's text of the story of Helenus in Rufinus's *Historia monacharum*, see http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02m/0345-0410,_Rufinus_Aquileiensis,_Historia_Monachorum.

⁴² For an English translation of the story of Helenus in Rufinus's *Historia monacharum*, see <http://www.vitae-patrum.org.uk>. For an English translation of the somewhat shortened version of the story in Palladius's *Lausiaca History*, see <http://www.vitae-patrum.org.uk/page117.html>. These references are to the 1615 edition of the *Vitae Patrum*. Further research is needed to identify the passages in earlier collections of the Desert Fathers that precede the Antwerp edition.

⁴³ Bartelink G. – Mohrmann C., *Palladio. La Storia Lausiaca* (Milan: 1998).

⁴⁴ For this passage, see <http://www.vitae-patrum.org.uk/page60.html> (Rufinus) and <http://www.vitae-patrum.org.uk/page117.html> (Palladius).

⁴⁵ For the unillustrated versions of the title-pages, cf. respectively, Garnefelt, *Elucidationes sacrae* 1, 26, 53, 78, and 101.

the *anachoretēs* as *Monumenta Sanctioris philosophiae quam severa Anachoretarum disciplina vitae at religio docuit*. They are living examples of the severe disciplines of Sacred Philosophy, which is superior to the ascetic philosophies of the ancients.⁴⁶ In Book 3 the topic is Victory. The triumphs of each hermit are celebrated as trophies of the solitary life (*Trophaeum vitae solitaria*). Book 4 evokes the *Oraculum* of the Anachorites. This is the place where prayers are heard and peace of mind is attained. The lives of the Desert Mothers celebrated in Book 5 are related to Isaiah's vision of Christ's Kingdom, 'wherein the wilderness rejoices and flourishes like the lily'. Solitude, sacred philosophy, spiritual victory, quietude, and female hermitage; these are the themes that provide a framework for the eremitical idylls assembled in these series.

The elucidations proper are neatly framed. The year and date of death appear in the margins. The places in the literature are duly noted, but of greatest interest is the abstract that follows the historical information. How do Helenus and Dorotheus fare in their respective elucidations? In the case of Helenus we discover that his *dies emortualis* (April 17) was based on the Latin translation of the *Menologion Graecorum* (the canonical list of saints of the Orthodox Church ordered by month) by Henricus Canisius (1562–1610), a professor at Ingolstadt and distant relation of Petrus Canisius [Fig. 9].⁴⁷ The first thing we learn about him is that as a child he was already known for cleanliness of life ('mundissimae vitae'), which reiterates the keyword (*mundities*) in the print. But the hagiographer's prose account evokes no eremitical idyll, merely noting that Helenus was fed by an angel in the desert. He also alludes to the spectacular story of Helenus using a crocodile to ferry across the Nile.

Garnefelt gives the anniversary of Dorotheus's death as 9 September 388. His authority is Maurolycus, one of the 'compilatores martyrologiorum', whose collection of ca. 1450 was not published until 1563. The elucidation

⁴⁶ For the 'ancient pedigree' of the tradition of physical and mental exercises in spiritual life, see Enenkel K. – Melion W., "Introduction", in *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Intersections 17 (Leiden – New York – Copenhagen: 2011) 1–23.

⁴⁷ Garnefelt, "Epistola", in *Elucidationes sacrae*, n.p.: "Menologium Graecorum similiter adhibui: ne quid praeirem; usus sum autem illo quod Henricus Canisius inter suas antiquitates publicavit". The reference is to Canisius Henricus, *Thesaurus monumentorum ecclesiasticorum et historicum: sive lectiones antiquae* (Ingolstadt, Andrea Angermarium: 1601–1614); also see: <http://books.google.com/books?id=RYITAAACAAJ&pg=PP5&dq=henricus+canisius+menologium+graecorum&hl=en&sa=X&ei=XAAIUC6kGNP64APk8oEI&ved=oCDUQ6AEwAQ>.

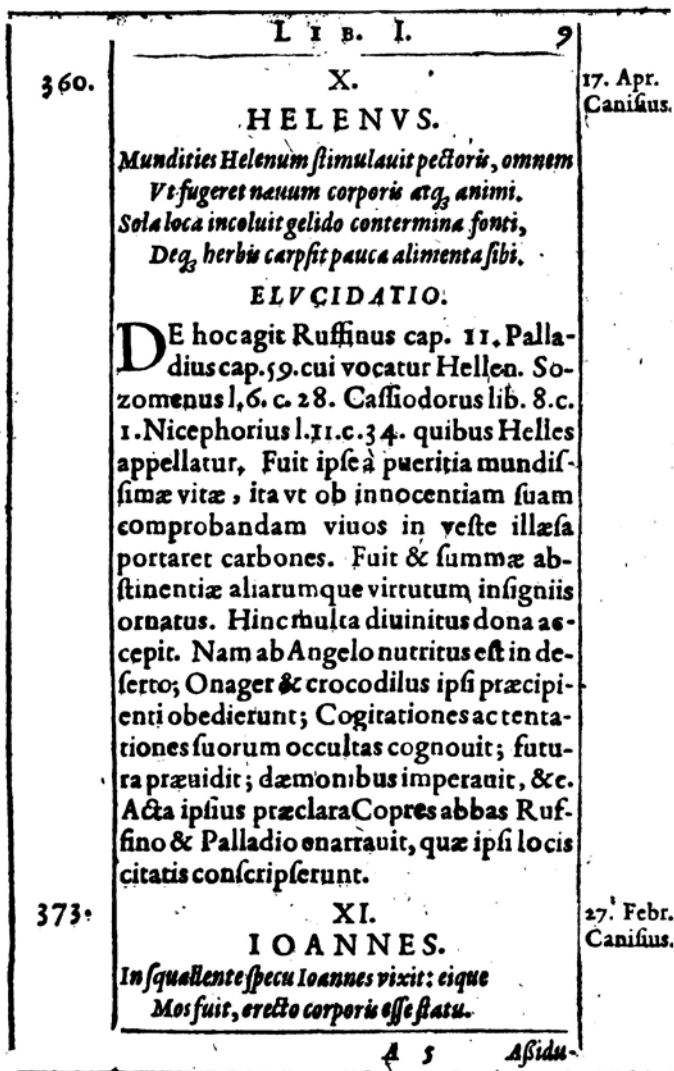


Fig. 9. Georg Garnefelt, "Elucidatio. Liber I 10. Helenus", in idem, *Elucidationes sacrae in quinque libros de imaginibus antiquorum eremitarum* (Cologne, Antonius Boetzerus: 1621). Die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (Sig. V.ss.c.88).

of Dorotheus echoes Palladius's short chapter: heat and squalor during the day, plying of palm fronds during the night. The mere word seaside ('para thalassan') gave De Vos licence to turn the torpor of the Gaza beach into a pleasing piscatorial image with its profusion of fisherman's baskets.

Garnefelt's Annotationes: Quisnam fuerit Collector & Poeta?

Garnefelt follows the 132 elucidations with 25 pages of annotations divided into six chapters. The first of these centers on one of the unresolved issues of the Sadeler prints. Who was the 'collector & poeta', what were his sources, what was his objective, how did he order his material, and was there a guiding principle?⁴⁸ It is customary, Garnefelt writes, for publishers to give their names and to explain and justify their projects. But not so in this case! The 'sculptors' (that is, engravers) are famous, deserving of the highest praise. But who, he asks, is the collector-poet? He surely had to be a learned man, well-versed in sacred history. To underscore the truth of this statement, he then proceeds to review the sources that were used by this hypothetical collector. The hermits in Book 1 were all taken from the *Vitae Patrum*. Book 2 was largely lifted from Surius's *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, with the exception of Marco (II 2), Egidius (II 20), and Nicolaus (II 29). All but seven of the saints in Book 3 came from Surius. Book 4 is a mixture of hermits from the *Vitae Patrum* and Surius. Most of the Desert Mothers depicted in the final set came from Surius, with some culled from the 'monuments of the Greeks', and the final one, Reynofla of Nivelles, the product of Molanus's hagiographical investigations.⁴⁹

The remainder of the *Annotationes* is a hagiological primer. They are supplemented with various appendices, which like the charts are very useful. For instance, Appendix 1 is a list of 260 hermits, ordered calendrically, whose names are inscribed in the *Martyrologium Romanum* with a mark for the ones included in the Sadeler series.⁵⁰ The dates allow the reader to worship the saints in the manner stipulated by the Council of Trent. The second appendix is a list of holy fathers not included in the *Martyrologium Romanum*, for example, the Blessed Nikolaus Helvetius

⁴⁸ Garnefelt, *Elucidationes sacrae* 125: 'Quisnam fuerit Collector & Poeta; quinam ipsius fontes, scopus, ordo; quid ipso cavendum'.

⁴⁹ The reference is to Johannes Molanus (1533–1585), theologian of Louvain, who addressed the reform of religious art after the Council of Trent.

⁵⁰ The reference is to the *Martyrologium Romanum* published in 1584.

or Friardus (I 17 and I 29), followed by a selection of saints who lack a feast date and are not mentioned in any of the *Fasti sanctorum*. The final appendix is historical. It tracks the history of asceticism from 64 AD, the year in which St. Mark established the school of ascesis in Alexandria, to the life of St. Theresa of Avila in the sixteenth century. It is an impressive overview of the parallel universe of 'white martyrdom' in the Christian world.⁵¹

Teamwork

Realizing the importance of the *carmina*, is there any hope of identifying the 'collector-poeta'? Most scholars take the Sadeler on their word when they claim in the title-print of the *Sylvae Sacrae* that they are 'Auth. & Scalp.' But was Johannes the sort of man, 'learned and well-versed in sacred history', who would delve into old and new editions of the *Vitae Patrum* or the dense folios of Surius, there to find the topics for 108 *carmina*?

The title print of the Desert Mother series is less reticent about the team that produced it. It lists 'Marten de Vos D.D.', Adriaen Collart as the sculptor, and Cornelis Kilianus as poet. The identification of Kilianus (Cornelis Kiel, 1529–1607, the indefatigable lexicographer and corrector in Plantin's print shop) as collector-poet is an important piece of information.⁵² It helps us to conjecture a loosely knit association of collaborators with enough resources on board, including a man 'well-versed in sacred history', to carry out the *Solitudo* project.

Teamwork was an important factor in the production of prints and illustrated books. As a trainee in Plantin's print shop *The Golden Compasses*, Jan Sadeler participated in the production of a new type of illustrated

⁵¹ To define different forms of martyrdom by color had become a commonplace in religious circles by the end of the Early Christian period. As Jerome wrote, 'Shedding blood is not the only form of martyrdom'. The Desert Fathers did not shed blood, but underwent daily martyrdom through mortification of the flesh. For the color code of martyrdom, see Pigg D., "Refiguring Martyrdom: Chaucer's Prioress and Her Tale", *The Chaucer Review* 29, 1 (1994) 65–73. The holy men of the Irish-Celtic world were frequently characterized as 'white martyrs' like St. Columba, who made the sacrifice of leaving kin and home and sailing far away 'over the glassy main'. For the rather vague triad of the three martyrdoms in Celtic and Irish spirituality, see Stancliffe C., "Red, white, and blue martyrdom," in Whitelock D. – McKitterick R. – Dumville D. (eds.), *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge: 1982) 21–46. The Sadeler hermits are 'green martyrs', in clear opposition to the red martyrs of Rome.

⁵² Rooses M. (ed.), *Kilianus. Latijnsche gedichten* (Antwerp: 1880).

book, Arias Montanus's *Humanae Salutis Monumenta* (1571), the revolutionary biblical emblem book designed to delight the eyes and stimulate the mind ('dum reficit pictura oculos dum carmen mentem').⁵³ Montanus selected the topics, composed the *carmina* ('concinnebat'), to which he added a visual proposal that suggested a pictorial idea. Draftsmen such as Crispijn van den Broeck and Pieter van der Borch translated these sketches into *modelli*, similar to the ones that Marten de Vos produced for the Sadeler. These *modelli* were cut into plates by a pool of engravers, which included Jan Sadeler, who was responsible for several of the prints. In those years in Plantin's shop, he also would have become aware of the role of Cornelis Kiel in the production of prints. Many publishing families, the Collaerts, Galles, De Jodes, Van de Passes, relied on Plantin's faithful servant and corrector, Cornelis Kiel, to dash off the verses for the prints they were cutting at a dizzying rate. How often do we read 'illustratae a C. Kiliano Dufflaeo', 'ludebat Cornelius Kilianus Dufflaeus', or a 'Cornelio Kiliano Dufflaeo versibus breviter explanatae'? Here we have a man versed in Greek and Latin, not a humanist or a clergyman, but a wage-earner, happy to oblige. We know him as a great lexicographer and proofreader, a man who almost singlehandedly raised Dutch to one of the great vernacular languages of Europe. He knew his languages, but as a poet he was little more than serviceable. Indispensable to his work as corrector was Plantin's large library. During the late 1570s he translated for Plantin the *50 Homilies of Macarius*, a work similar in form and function to the hagiographies of the Greek Desert Fathers.⁵⁴ If the project of the hermit prints was conceived in Antwerp, Cornelis Kiel could have been a team-player, plotting each next batch with De Vos.

But we should not discount the importance of the Sadeler's wide-flung network. Between 1577 and 1586, Jan Sadeler commuted between Antwerp and Cologne, the city in Germany where printers had just published the huge tomes of Surius's *De probatis sanctorum*. Someone, he himself, a Carthusian perhaps, or a printer, might have come up with the idea of publishing a set of *images* of excellent men – *virī probati* – as a pleasant complement to these newly authoritative hagiographical monuments. Hypothetically, this scenario would furnish Jan Sadeler with a list of names, and a sheaf of sketches, which he would hand over to Marten de

⁵³ Montanus Benito Arias, *Humanae salutis monumentae* (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin: 1581); also see: <http://archive.org/stream/humanaesalutismooaria#page/n1/mode/2up>.

⁵⁴ Macarius, *50. homilien oft verclaringhen* [...] *Macaris den Egyptenaer; overghes. in de Neder-duytsche spraecke door Cornelis Kiel* (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin: 1580).

Vos, dictating the choice of saints, and perhaps a pictorial idea, but leaving the final invention of the *modello* to the Antwerp artist. The fact that De Vos drew *Dorotheus* as late as 1597 is proof that the project proceeded piecemeal and excludes the possibility that the Sadeler's were in possession of all the *modelli* before they left Antwerp or Cologne for good.

Considering Jan Sadeler's peregrinations, it is more than likely that the plates of the first set were cut in Frankfurt, and we may presume that the *modelli* by De Vos were brought to that city by the Sadeler's themselves.⁵⁵ Frankfurt with its vibrant émigré culture and the twice-yearly Book Fair was one of the great informational hubs of the period, and the idea of publishing the eremitical lives might have found enthusiastic support among the Flemish émigrés drawn to the city. The hermit prints are not the only hagiographical project associated with the Sadeler name. After Jan Sadeler's death, his younger brother Raphael, was prevailed upon by the Tyrolean Jesuit Matthias Rader (1561–1634) to collaborate in the production of the *Bavaria sancta*, a compendium of Bavarian saints.⁵⁶ It was part of a heroic effort to reconsecrate a land that had been ravaged by the 'war on the saints'. Rader was the chief impresario, researcher, and formulator of the topics, providing *Anweisungen* (directions) for Johann Matthias Käger (1575–1634), the artist who prepared the *modelli* for the engravings. This was a process reminiscent of the collaborative effort that produced Montanus's emblem book. Rader's relationship with the Sadeler's goes back to at least 1594, when the Sadeler's included a poem of praise by him in the *Sylvae Sacrae*. It may have been at that juncture that the print series, originally designed to distill a generalized conception of Christian philosophy as a way of life, instead became an instrument of Catholic Reform, portraying the religious vocation as one that tempers militancy with solitary contemplation. This shift is evident in the publication in 1606 of a new edition of the *Solitudo sive vitae patrum* series, printed from new plates cut by Thomas de Leu in Paris. Each desert father is now shown with a halo, evidence that they are to be considered members of the community of saints. Garnefelt's elucidations, of course, are a

⁵⁵ The title prints, in fact, represent a remarkable convergence between the émigré culture of international Protestantism in Frankfurt and the Jesuit counter-offensive in Munich. For Frankfurt and its émigrés, see Papenbrock M., *Landschaften des Exils: Gillis van Coninxloo und die Frankenthaler Maler* (Cologne: 2001).

⁵⁶ Rader Matthäus, *Bavaria Sancta*, 4 vols. (Munich, Raphael Sadeler: 1615). On the illustrations, engraved by Raphael Sadeler after Johann Käger and Pieter de Witte (Pietro Candido), see Hollstein F.W.H. (ed.), *German Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts, c. 1400–1700*, Vol. 21 (Amsterdam: 1986) 263, nos. 239–298 and 299–342.



Fig. 10. Johannes Sadeler after Marten de Vos, *Gualfardus* (1600). Engraving, ca. 28 × 36 cm. Pitts Theological Library at Emory University. Image©libmpg@emory.edu.

concerted effort to claim the Desert Fathers for the Catholic cause, but these attempts did not diminish the innate attraction of the prints as eremitical idylls for Protestant and Catholics alike, no matter the name and origins of the pictured hermit.

Impensis was the word the Sadelers used in the opening title print to indicate how much effort they had lavished in carrying out this unique project. They also had the final word. The very last print in the *Oraculum* series shows us the blessed Gualfardus (1070–1127) [Fig. 10]. He was born in Augsburg but, according to the verse below, ‘decked out horses with ornaments’ in the city of Verona, before retiring into the woods. Garnefelt is even more specific: before opting for the woods, Gualfardus *ephippiarius* practiced the “Ephippiary art” or the making of saddlecloths.⁵⁷ He was in fact a sadler, or sadeler, evoking in his art the name of the artists, scions of a Brussels dynasty of saddle-makers, who with the image of Gualfardus brought a great hagiographical project to a close.

⁵⁷ Garnefelt, “Elucidatio 20”, in *Elucidationes sacrae* 100. Verse: ‘Augusta in Suevis ortus Gualfardus, in urbe/Veronae phaleris arte tegebat equos’. Text: ‘Honestis Auguste Vindelicorum parentibus ortus, Veronae in Italia ephippiaram exercuit artem’.

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LECTIO DIVINA AND FRANCIS DE SALES'S PICTURING OF THE INTERCONNECTION OF DIVINE AND HUMAN HEARTS

Joseph F. Chorprenning

Introduction

In speaking of visual exegesis, Francis de Sales (1567–1622) may not immediately come to mind. After all, he was not a painter, sculptor, or engraver, at least in the conventional sense, but the early seventeenth-century French-speaking Savoyard Roman Catholic bishop of Geneva, resident in exile in Annecy [Fig. 1]. Francis was renowned during his lifetime as a model Tridentine bishop, one of Christendom's greatest preachers, a much sought out spiritual director, a best-selling author, and the founder – together with Saint Jane Frances de Chantal (1572–1641) – of one of the major new orders of the Catholic reform, the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. With the exception of engraved title pages, Francis's published works were otherwise not illustrated. But throughout his writings and sermons, he appeals to painting, engraving, and picturing to describe his project as a spiritual writer and preacher, as well as to explain a particular point that he is trying to convey.¹

The principal witness at the canonical process for Francis's beatification, Mother de Chantal, testifies that what was most admired about Francis's writings and sermons was 'the very easy and clear way that he had of expressing his meaning and of giving simple and solid explanations of the most abstruse mysteries of our holy faith'.² This 'very easy and clear way

¹ For example, in the *Treatise on the Love of God* (Book 2, chap. 2), Francis uses printing and painting to explain the difference between divine creation and nature. Accomplished 'by a single impulse of [God's] all-powerful will' (par un seul trait de sa toute-puissante volonté), the former is akin to the production of a print of the Lord's Nativity that is the result of one stroke of the press. By contrast, nature, which entails much time and activity, is likened to painting, which involves a great investment of time and work on the part of the artist. Saint François de Sales, *Œuvres*, ed. A. Ravier – R. Devos, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: 1969) 414 (hereafter *Œuvres*).

² *L'Âme de saint François de Sales révélée par sainte Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal dans une de ses lettres et dans sa déposition au procès de béatification du serviteur de Dieu 1627* (Annecy: 2010) 105: 'la grande facilité et clarté qu'il avait à s'exprimer et à donner une naïve et solide intelligence aux [des] mystères plus difficiles de notre sainte foi'.



L'Évêque François de Sales Evêque et Prince de Genève fondateur de l'ordre de la Visitation.

Fig. 1. Grégoire Huret, "St. Francis de Sales as Spiritual Writer", engraving in *Les Œuvres du bienheureux François de Sales* [...], ed. N. Brûlart de Sillery and N. Talon (Paris, A. Cottinet – Roger & Lozet: 1641). Photo: courtesy Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia.

[...] of expressing his meaning' often took the form of verbal pictures, word-paintings, and word-emblems that evoked familiar iconographic motifs.³ Francis excelled in composing such images, which were to be beheld not by the eyes of the body, but by the mind's eye. His ability to paint pictorially vivid images in the mind's eye of the reader or listener resembled a painter's capturing them on canvas.⁴

No one was more aware of the parallelism between the sister arts of painting and writing than Francis himself, who, for example, in the preface of his most popular and best-selling book, *Introduction to the Devout*

³ See, e.g., Chorpenning J., "Francis de Sales and the Emblematic Tradition: The Palm Tree as an Allegory of St. Joseph's Virtues", in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni-Bruslé A. (eds.), *Emblemata Sacra: Rhétorique et herméneutique du discours sacré dans la littérature en images / The Rhetoric and Hermeneutics of Illustrated Sacred Discourse*, Imago Figurata Studies 7 (Turnhout: 2007) 333–347; idem, "Francis de Sales's Emblematic Interpretation of the Death of St. Joseph (*Treatise on the Love of God*, Book 7, chapter 13)", in Campa P. – Daly P. (eds.), *Emblematic Images and Religious Texts: Studies in Honor of G. Richard Dimler, S.J.*, Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts 2 (Philadelphia: 2010) 123–143; and idem, "Pèlerinage avec le Rédempteur dans le sein de Marie: méditation de saint François de Sales sur le mystère biblique de la Visitation, 1610", in Picaud G. – Foisselon J. (eds.), *De l'ombre à la lumière: Art et histoire à la Visitation – 1610–2010. Actes du colloque international organisé par le musée de la Visitation à Moulins, les 22 et 23 octobre 2010* (Paris – Moulins: 2011) 47–53 [English version: "Pilgrimage with the Redeemer in the Womb: St. Francis de Sales's 1610 Meditation on the Biblical Mystery of the Visitation", in Cull J. – Daly P. (eds.), *In nocte consilium: Studies in Emblematics in Honor of Pedro F. Campa, Saecula Spiritualia* 46 (Baden-Baden: 2011) 323–340]. Also see Guiderdoni-Bruslé A., "Images et emblèmes dans la spiritualité de saint François de Sales", *XVII^e Siècle* 214 (2002) 35–54; Legros P., "L'esthétique de saint François de Sales: Étude de quatre méditations de l'*Introduction à la vie dévote*", *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* 21 (1994) 9–30; idem, "Approche iconologique de l'oraison dédicatoire du *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* de François de Sales", *XVII^e Siècle* 196 (1997) 479–493; and idem, *François de Sales: Une poétique de l'imaginaire. Étude des représentations visuelles dans l'Introduction à la vie dévote et le Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, Biblio 17 – 151 (Tübingen: 2004).

⁴ Salesian word artistry aims to appeal not only to the intellect, but to the whole person – the imagination, affect, and heart. This approach is in keeping with the aesthetic sensibilities of early seventeenth-century French aristocratic society, to which a significant number of Francis's readers and listeners belonged. It also exhibits Francis's rhetorical virtuosity – the art of speaking and writing well and persuasively – that he learned at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont in Paris. But, most importantly, Francis's poetic language is grounded in his firm conviction that beautiful language is not simply the best and most effective way to communicate and persuade, but that it is essential for drawing his reader or listener to God, who is not only true and good, but supremely beautiful (*Treatise*, Book 7, chap. 5). Francis's images and metaphors are not merely rhetorical ornament, device, or artifice, but they seek to create beauty in order to capture his reader's or congregation's imagination so that they might glimpse the very essence of God, and be attracted to Him. '[B]eautiful words, colorful images, and carefully turned phrases [...] draw the imagination, the heart, and the mind toward their source and final end: God' (Wright W., *Francis de Sales: Introduction to the Devout Life and Treatise on the Love of God*, Crossroad Spiritual Legacy Series [New York: 1993; reprint ed., New York: 1997] 41).

Life (1609), declares: 'Now, it is my opinion, my reader, my friend, that it is God's will that I, being a bishop, paint upon the hearts of His people not only the ordinary virtues, but also God's most dear and well beloved devotion'.⁵ Heart is here understood in its biblical sense as 'the core of the person, the central integrating and energizing principle from which thought, feeling and action flow. To know the heart [is] thus to know the foundational truth of the person'.⁶ Moreover, as the divinely ordained painter of devotion, Francis the author casts himself in the *Introduction's* preface as the early modern counterpart of Apelles, who in the Renaissance was regarded as the greatest artist of classical antiquity. This comparison underscores Francis's word artistry in an unexpected way, as none of Apelles's paintings survive, and are known only by Pliny's word descriptions, in the manner of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (1550, 1568), which 'is a history of art without illustrations', as Vasari 'carefully describes countless paintings, many from memory, with verbal abundance'.⁷

While all Christians are called to imitate Christ, there is no single way of doing so. On the contrary, the history of Christianity reveals that there are 'innumerable forms and varieties of ways' to follow Christ.⁸ Consequently, there is a wealth of Christian spiritual traditions: Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite, Ignatian, to mention the most well-known. Francis de Sales's unique vision of the Christian life also gave rise to a distinctive spiritual tradition in the Church, the Salesian tradition. This tradition's horizon of thought is set forth in Francis's writings and sermons, where it 'is virtually impossible to turn to a page [...] which does not contain some reference to the human heart or the heart of God or of Jesus or which does not use affective language associated with the image of the heart'.⁹ Francis pictures his spiritual vision as a world or universe of

⁵ *Œuvres* 27: 'Or, il m'est avis, mon Lecteur mon ami, qu'étant Évêque, Dieu veut que je peigne sur les cœurs des personnes non seulement les vertus communes, mais encore sa très chère et bien aimée dévotion'.

⁶ Wright W., "Inside My Body Is the Body of God: Margaret Mary Alacoque and the Tradition of Embodied Mysticism", in Boenig R. (ed.), *The Mystical Gesture: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Spiritual Culture in Honor of Mary E. Giles* (Aldershot: 2000) 185–192, esp. 188. Also see Ravier A., *Francis de Sales: Sage and Saint*, trans. J. Bowler (San Francisco: 1988) 146.

⁷ Armas F. de, "Introduction", in idem (ed.), *Writing for the Eyes in the Spanish Golden Age* (Lewisburg, PA: 2004) 7–20, esp. 13.

⁸ Wright W., *The Essential Spirituality Handbook* (Ligouri, MO: 2009) 211.

⁹ Wright W., "That Is What It Is Made For: The Image of the Heart in the Spirituality of Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal", in Callahan A. (ed.), *Spiritualities of the Heart: Approaches to Personal Wholeness in Christian Tradition* (New York: 1990) 143–158, esp. 144.

conjoined hearts: the heart of God and human hearts interconnected by their common natures and, due to sin, now bridged by the human-divine heart of Jesus that makes it possible for human hearts to recover the ability to pulse and beat in union with the divine heart.

It is a commonplace in scholarship on Salesian spirituality that the word-picture of the world of hearts is the tradition's master metaphor and the interpretive lens through which its history is to be viewed, from its inception and diffusion in the seventeenth century, through its recovery and expansion after the French Revolution in the nineteenth-century Salesian Pentecost, and down to the present.¹⁰ In this paper, I propose to amplify this understanding of this Salesian word-picture by considering three interrelated facets of Francis's picturing of the Salesian universe of interconnected hearts that are either absent or have yet to be fully examined in scholarship on this topic: first, the historical context that gave rise to Francis's spiritual vision; second, the meditative-contemplative form of prayer known as *lectio divina*, which shaped Francis's picturing of his spiritual vision, particularly his image of the heart of Jesus; and, third, the series of word-pictures of the Salesian world of hearts that are a visual exegesis of the foundational scriptural texts from which it is derived.

I. *Francis de Sales and Militant Catholicism in Paris of the 1580s*

The Salesian spiritual vision is the fruit of the defining experience of Francis's life: as a nineteen-year-old student in Paris, he was afflicted for six weeks by a debilitating temptation to despair of his salvation. This experience, and Francis's subsequent insistence on Jesus's gentle and humble heart as the centerpiece of the Salesian spiritual vision, cannot be fully grasped without reference to the tensions and violence in Paris during Francis's student days, not only between Catholics and Huguenots, but also within French Catholicism: militant Catholics embraced an ethos of violence, religious anxiety, and rigorous penitential asceticism to assuage God's anger and avert divine punishment of France, while moderate Catholics favored a pacific approach to Protestantism more in keeping with the Gospel. During Francis's final four years in Paris, tensions between Catholic moderates and militants reached new heights, culminating with

¹⁰ See Wright W., *Heart Speaks to Heart: The Salesian Tradition*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series (Maryknoll, NY: 2004).

the Huguenot Henry of Navarre (1553–1610) becoming heir to the French throne. In response to this crisis, Parisian Catholic militants resolved to eliminate Protestantism and moderate Catholic influence from each of the city's sixteen neighborhoods (*quartiers*). Amidst this political and religious discord, Francis became embroiled in his own personal spiritual crisis.¹¹

Most accounts of Francis's crisis identify its source as the debates about predestination that he encountered in his classes. But the fear of damnation, which was at the core of this crisis, 'is more likely to have come from the militant [Catholic] discourses in the city which so frequently referred to God's punishment and the End Times rather [than] in [Francis's] classes with the Jesuits'.¹² In Paris, Francis not only encountered but also appropriated and participated in popular enthusiasm for militant Catholicism and its ascetic rigor.¹³ Living, studying, and worshipping in the Latin Quarter, a citadel of militant Catholicism, Francis frequented parishes in the neighborhood where radical preachers urged Catholics to wage war on heresy and sin.¹⁴ Francis's journal entries from the 1580s 'indicate that he had internalized in no small way the notion of a vengeful, punishing God,

¹¹ Donlan T., "The Reform of Zeal: François de Sales and Militant Catholicism during the French Wars of Religion" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, Tempe: 2011) 11, 45, 71–72. This groundbreaking thesis offers a compelling new historical interpretation of Francis by situating him squarely in the context of the French Wars of Religion. Although Francis was a French-speaking Savoyard, whose sovereign was the Duke of Savoy rather than the French king, nonetheless, Francis's 'active religious career unfolded entirely within the period of the French Wars of Religion (1562–1629)' (8). More specifically, Donlan argues, the fact that Francis 'lived and studied in Paris for ten years (1578–1588), oversaw scores of parishes in the kingdom of France as a bishop, and established the majority of the Visitation convents in France [...] justifies the characterization of him as a part of and a historical agent within *French Catholicism*' (42; author's emphasis). Donlan maintains that Salesian scholarship's failure to contextualize Francis as 'operating within the matrix of *French Catholicism*' (ibidem; author's emphasis) has led to neglect of his role as the architect of a divergent culture within the French Catholic world during the Wars of Religion. In short, while part of Francis's ministry as a priest and bishop focused on Protestantism, an even greater portion was dedicated to reforming the French Wars of Religion's militant Catholicism.

¹² Donlan, "The Reform of Zeal" 73, note 217.

¹³ Donlan, "The Reform of Zeal" 78: '[De] Sales was drawn to the asceticism and heroism of militant Catholicism. In the name of spiritual purity and perfection, he separated himself from others, fearing that communing with them would taint him. Seeking to distance himself from the pleasures of the body, de Sales wore a hair shirt and adopted other practices of corporal mortification. For a period of time, de Sales marveled over the bold renunciation of the world of Ange de Joyeuse, who abandoned the comforts of court life for Capuchin austerities'.

¹⁴ Donlan, "The Reform of Zeal" 68.

so prevalent in French Catholicism in this period. [...] [Francis] began to fear God's judgment as many Catholic authorities advised'.¹⁵ The intractable divisions between militant and moderate Catholics, with their conflicting views of a wrathful God intent on punishment and a merciful God who welcomed sinners and desired all to be in communion with Him, swirling around Francis, then played out within him, throwing the young man into spiritual, emotional, and physical turmoil. 'This state of anguish [...] was so violent that he could hardly eat or sleep, and he became thin and yellow as wax [...]'.¹⁶

Relief came when Francis found himself able to pray, 'Whatever may happen, O Lord, [...] I will love You [...] at least in this life, if it is not given me to love You in eternal life',¹⁷ and definitive deliverance came when he recited Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's *Memorare*, while kneeling before the statue of Our Lady of Deliverance in the Dominican church of Saint-Étienne-des-Grès. At the University of Padua, the topic of predestination resurfaced in Francis's theological studies, and now he articulated an understanding more attuned to the scriptural truth of God's will to save all (1 *Timothy* 2:4), averring that God's name 'is not the one who condemns, but the one who saves' ('non est damnator, sed Jesus').¹⁸

With the passing of the crisis, Francis distanced himself from militant Catholic piety. Subsequently, as a priest and bishop, Francis tirelessly devoted himself to a program of reforming Catholic militancy that was centered 'on the notion of gentleness (*douceur*)', which he 'employed [by] an array of pastoral, rhetorical, and institutional strategies intended to teach French Catholics to abandon the violent treatment of Protestants and aggressive forms of self-mortification for attitudes and practices characterized by love, forbearance, and reconciliation'.¹⁹

During his studies in Paris, Francis also found a biblical mode of expression for articulating his view of God. From the lectures on the *Song of Songs*

¹⁵ Donlan, "The Reform of Zeal" 74.

¹⁶ *L'Âme de saint François de Sales révélée par sainte Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal* 20: 'Ce travail lui dura [...] avec telle violence, qu'il perdit quasi tout le manger et le dormir, et devint tout maigre et jaune comme de cire [...]'.
¹⁷ *Œuvres de saint François de Sales, Édition complète*, 27 vols. (Annecy: 1892–1964) XXII 19–20 (hereafter Annecy edition): 'Quoi qu'il arrive, Seigneur, [...] je vous aimerai [...] au moins en cette vie, s'il ne m'est pas donné de vous aimer dans la vie éternelle'.

¹⁸ Annecy edition XXII 66.

¹⁹ Donlan, "The Reform of Zeal" 11. On the semantic richness of Salesian *douceur*, see Mellinshoff-Bourgerie V., "*Dulcedo Dei, Lenitas hominis*: Théorie et pratique de la douceur selon François de Sales", in Baby H. – Rieu J. (eds.), *La Douceur en littérature de l'Antiquité au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 2012) 223–246.

of the Benedictine Gilbert Générard (1537–97), professor of Hebrew at the Royal College at the University of Paris, Francis learned that the kind of fear engendered by Calvinist and militant Catholic teaching on predestination had no place in the love story between God and the human family.²⁰ ‘Francis found both in the sacred text [of the *Song of Songs*] and in [Générard’s] commentary, inspiration for his whole life, the theme for his masterpiece [the *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616)], and the first and the best source of his optimism. [...] The history of the world and its salvation was [...] a love story. And the young student was carried away by the idea’.²¹ The *Song of Songs* ‘provided [Francis] with the expressions and images for voicing his own insights and understanding of love’.²²

The *Song of Songs*’ love story has been identified as the principal source of the Salesian ‘universe of meaning’,²³ in which the reciprocal divine-human love relationship is imaged as a mutual breathing and beating of hearts: an interconnected world of hearts that is both vertical (human hearts linked to God’s heart by the gentle and humble heart of Jesus) and horizontal (human hearts pulsing in union with one another). But there is another important source that has received less attention: Francis’s ruminative meditative-contemplative prayer – *lectio divina* – a practice he seems to have adopted after the Paris crisis, during his student days at Padua (1588–1592).

II. *Lectio divina and the Picturing of the Salesian World of Hearts*

At Padua, Francis drew up, under the direction of his spiritual director and intellectual mentor, the Jesuit theologian and diplomat Antonio

²⁰ See, for example, Wright, *Francis de Sales: Introduction to the Devout Life and Treatise on the Love of God* 134–136; and Fiorelli L., *Inspired Common Sense: Seven Fundamental Themes of Salesian Spirituality* (Stella Niagara, NY: 2012) 13–14.

²¹ Lajeunie E.-J., *St. Francis de Sales: The Man, The Thinker, His Influence*, trans. R. O’Sullivan, 2 vols. (Bangalore: 1986–1987) I 63.

²² Ceresko A., “The Interpretation of the *Song of Songs* in St. Francis de Sales: How a Saint Learned the Lessons of Love”, *Salesianum* 66 (2004) 31–50, esp. 44 (reprinted in idem, *St. Francis de Sales and the Bible* [Bangalore: 2005] 152–181). In her seminal study, *Saint François de Sales: Une nouvelle mystique* (Paris: 2008), H. Michon argues that Francis uses Scripture in the *Treatise* as a common language shared by Christians in all states of life in order to make the mystical life accessible to all in accord with the universal call to holiness, while also bridging the divorce that had developed between the spiritual life and dogmatic theology.

²³ Ceresko, “The Interpretation of the *Song of Songs* in St. Francis de Sales” 32.

Possevino (1534–1611),²⁴ a rule of life that he entitled *Spiritual Exercises*, to aid him in cultivating devotion in the midst of the dissipated world of student life. It is hardly surprising that the influence of Saint Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* is discernible in the Salesian *Exercises*: 'at the Jesuit College of Clermont in Paris, [...] [Francis had been] schooled [...] not only in the humanistic curriculum, but also in the imaginative world of the [Ignatian] *Spiritual Exercises*'.²⁵ The core of Francis's *Exercises* is this daily practice, based on the *Gospel of John* 13:23: 'I will daily allot a certain time for [...] sacred sleep, so that my soul, in imitation of the Beloved Disciple, reposes with complete confidence on the lovable breast, actually in the loving heart, of the loving Savior'.²⁶ The Ignatian *Exercises* aim to bring the retreatant 'to a personal encounter with Jesus' and 'the composition of place (*compositio loci*) is a special occasion for facilitating this encounter'.²⁷ In fact, the Salesian practice of spiritual repose is closely linked to the composition of place: it makes Francis present to the event of John resting on the Lord's breast at the Last Supper in such a way that the narrative of the Gospel and that of Francis's own life interact as he 'encounters in a concrete way the person of Jesus by stepping into the scene',²⁸ and appropriating the role of the Beloved Disciple. Historically, consideration of Salesian contemplative prayer has given pride of place to Mother de Chantal and the nascent Visitation, as Francis himself does in the preface to the *Treatise on the Love of God*.²⁹ However, Francis's

²⁴ Possevino is regarded as one of the greatest teachers in Jesuit history. While he first served the Church as a diplomat in Sweden and Russia, he found his true calling as a teacher in Padua, where he taught theology between 1587 and 1591. See Bailey G.A., *Between Renaissance and Baroque: Jesuit Art in Rome, 1565–1610* (Toronto: 2003) 11–12. On Francis's relationship with Possevino, see Charmot F., *Ignatius Loyola and Francis de Sales: Two Masters – One Spirituality*, trans. Sr. M. Renelle (St. Louis – London: 1966) 13–14.

²⁵ Wright W., "The Ignatian-Salesian Imagination and Familied Life", in Chorpenning J. (ed.), *The Holy Family in Art and Devotion* (Philadelphia: 1998) 104–109, esp. 105. Also see Chorpenning J., "Introduction", in Francis de Sales, *Spiritual Exercises*, trans. W. Dougherty, Peregrina Translations Series (Toronto, 1993; reprint ed., Toronto: 2000) 7–26, *passim*. For a recent overview of the historical development of the notion of spiritual exercises, see Stock B., "Healers without Books, Readers without Souls", *New Literary History* 37 (2006) 503–513, esp. 505–507.

²⁶ Annecy edition XXII 28: 'je destineray tous les jours certain tems pour [...] sacré sommeil, a ce que mon ame, a l'imitation du bienaymé Disciple, dorme en toute assurance sur l'amiable poitrine, voire dans le cœur amoureux de l'amoureux Sauveur'.

²⁷ Standaert N., "The Composition of Place: Creating Space for an Encounter", *The Way* 46, 1 (2007) 7–20, esp. 7.

²⁸ Ibidem 17.

²⁹ *Œuvres* 347–348.

practice of spiritual repose opens a window on his own contemplative prayer as perhaps no other source does.

Previous scholarship has noted that Francis's practice of spiritual repose 'has its origins in the monastic practice of *lectio divina* (spiritual reading) in which scripture or other edifying material is deeply assimilated through a process of *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation), *oratio* (prayer), and *contemplatio* (contemplation)'.³⁰ This idea complements the notion that this Salesian exercise may have grown out of Francis's making the Ignatian *Exercises*, because in the latter prayer is 'a particular form of the process traditionally described as [...] *lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio*'.³¹ These traditions of meditative-contemplative prayer are synthesized in the Salesian *Exercises*, in which Francis speaks of *contemplatio* as 'repose'. The lifelong, daily nature of Francis's practice of spiritual repose in the heart of Jesus,³² following the example of the Beloved Disciple at the Last Supper, further underscores its connection to *lectio divina*, which essentially consists in repeatedly ruminating or 'chewing on' a particular Scripture verse so that it 'became lodged in the memory and thus in the person' in order 'to transform the reader'.³³

'Contemplation', Francis explains in his most mature work, *Treatise on the Love of God*, 'is a kind of drinking: it is easy and natural, pleasant and smooth'.³⁴ Voicing an ancient and venerable tradition, the Office for the feast of Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist (27 December) proclaims

³⁰ Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 182, note 15.

³¹ Ivens M., *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: 1998; Leominster – New Malden: 2008) 3. However, see O'Reilly T., *The Bible in the Literary Imagination of the Spanish Golden Age*, Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts 3 (Philadelphia: 2010) 254, note 18: 'Ignatius, it may be said, modified the role of *lectio*, requiring his exercitant not to read the Gospel text directly, but, instead, to receive from the director a brief summary of the matter to be meditated [...], a provision that helped to make meditation accessible to people for whom reading was not easy, or even impossible'. My understanding of the connection between the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* and *lectio divina* has been aided by consultation with Professors Wendy M. Wright and Terence O'Reilly.

³² Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 27–28.

³³ Fulton R., *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: 2002) 156. Also see O'Reilly T., "St. John of the Cross and the Traditions of Monastic Exegesis", in Rees M. (ed.), *Leeds Papers on Saint John of the Cross* (Leeds: 1991) 105–126 (reprinted in O'Reilly T., *From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross: Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth-Century Spain* [Aldershot: 1995]); and Rees M., "Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza's Paradisal Garden, *lectio divina*, and Ignatian Spiritual Exercises," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* [Liverpool] 86 (2009) 763–773.

³⁴ *Œuvres* 627 (*Treatise*, Book 6, chap. 6): 'boire, c'est contempler, [...] se fait sans peine ni résistance, avec plaisir et coulamment'.

at Matins: 'He drank in the rivers of the Gospel from the Lord's breast as from a holy fountain'.³⁵ Through his resting on the breast and in the heart of Jesus, in imitation of the Beloved Disciple, Francis also drank in 'the rivers of the Gospel', specifically the icons of Jesus's heart in the *Gospels of John* and *Matthew* that he then distills into word-pictures in his writings and sermons.

In his spiritual repose, Francis came, as Pope Saint Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) put it, 'to know the heart of God in the words of God'.³⁶ 'To know the heart [is] [...] to know the foundational truth of the person. To know the heart of Jesus [is] to become intimate with the ultimate mystery of God'.³⁷ In this process and encounter, Jesus the living Word made Francis anew, according to His own Heart, by 'forming within [him] a new heart, a heart of flesh like His own, to be inserted into the place of [the] old [heart]; a heart capable of feeling, thinking, and loving like God Himself [...]'.³⁸ There is ample testimony to Francis's transformation, as Mother de Chantal testifies in a letter written in December 1623, a year after his death: 'it seems to me in all simplicity that my blessed Father was a living image upon which the Son of God Our Lord was painted [...]. I am not alone in this thought: many people have told me when seeing [him], they seemed to see Our Lord on earth'.³⁹ Indeed, Francis's meditative-contemplative practice of resting in the divine heart 'provided an experiential basis for his theological vision of the world of hearts'.⁴⁰ Francis then translated what he experienced in and drew from this prayer into the distinctive Salesian word-portraits of the heart of Jesus as the centerpiece of his spiritual vision.

³⁵ *The Roman Breviary: An Approved English Translation Complete in One Volume from the Official Text of the Breviarum Romanum Authorized by the Holy See* (New York: 1964) 82. On the figure of John the Beloved Disciple, see Hamburger J., *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: 2002).

³⁶ Quoted by Dillon C., "Lectio divina in the Monastic Tradition", *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 34, 3 (1999) 311–320, esp. 312–313.

³⁷ Wright, "Inside My Body Is the Body of God" 188.

³⁸ Leiva-Merikakis S., "'Are You Afraid of the Thief?' A Cordial Approach to *Lectio Divina*", *Communio: International Catholic Review* 38 (2011) 434–464, esp. 443.

³⁹ Frémyot de Chantal J.-F., *Correspondance*, ed. M.-P. Burns, 6 vols. (Paris: 1986–1996) II 310: 'il me semble naïvement que mon Bienheureux Père était une image vivante en laquelle le Fils de Dieu Notre-Seigneur était peint [...]. Je ne suis pas seule en cette pensée: quantité de gens m'ont dit que quand ils voyaient ce Bienheureux, il leur semblait voir Notre-Seigneur en terre'.

⁴⁰ Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 27.

III. Salesian Word-Pictures as Visual Exegesis

The foundation of all Salesian thought and its world of hearts, is *Genesis* 1:26, that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God, which 'is most clearly realized in the human heart'.⁴¹ As Francis famously expresses it, 'God is the God of the human heart. [...] We are created to the image and likeness of God'.⁴² That authoritative seventeenth-century interpreter of Francis's thought, Adrien Gambart (1600–1668), memorably visualizes this foundational idea, in his emblem-book of Francis's life and teaching in images, by depicting the human heart shaped like, or placed in, a triangle, which is the symbol of the blessed Trinity [Fig. 2].⁴³

For the human person to be fully actualized, then, he/she must become what they are, living images of God, as indeed Francis did and was so perceived by his contemporaries.

God, in [Francis's] vision, is Love Itself. [...] God's Heart [...] breathes, pulses and beats. [...] [God] is thus [...] relational and dynamic. [...] Indeed, creation itself is the result of the [Trinity's] intrinsic dynamic of Love that spills out, that gives of itself in abundance. [...] As Love gives, it also receives and is intent on drawing to itself all that it has created. Thus the Heart of God can be said to love human hearts and to long for union.

The human heart, created to know and love God is, like its divine counterpart, dynamic and relational. It too breathes and beats. Through inspiration it draws in love. By aspiration it pours itself out towards its neighbor and its ultimate source. The human heart [...] is made to beat in rhythm with the heart of God. [...]

But clearly human hearts are 'arrhythmic'; they breathe and beat to a rhythm of their own. They are not at one with the heart of God. They are wounded or tarnished through original sin. What is needed is some intermediary heart that can bridge the human and divine realms, one heart that is both model and mediator that can transform human hearts and allow them to become what they were created to be. That heart is the crucified heart of Christ, the one who invites all to come and learn from Him for He is gentle and humble of heart.⁴⁴

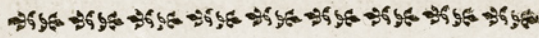
⁴¹ Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 32.

⁴² *Œuvres* 395–396 (*Treatise*, Book 1, chap. 15): 'Dieu est Dieu du cœur humain. [...] Nous sommes créés à l'image et semblance de Dieu'. This is the leit-motif of Pope Benedict XVI's General Audience address of 2 Mar. 2011 on St. Francis de Sales: see Pope Benedict XVI, *Doctors of the Church* (Huntington, IN.: 2011) 251–257.

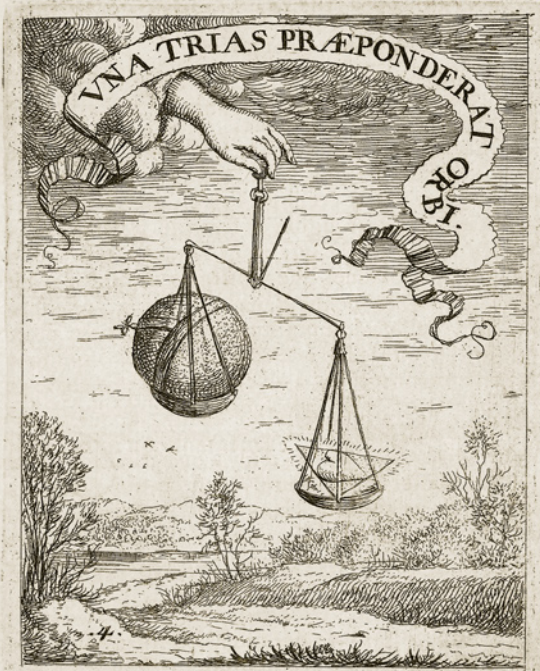
⁴³ Gambart A., *La vie symbolique du bienheureux François de Sales* [...] *Comprise sous le voile de 52 Emblemes* [...] (Paris, Aux frais de l'auteur: 1664) 12 (Embleme IV).

⁴⁴ Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 32–33.

12

La vie Symbolique

EMBLEME IV.

Son amour de preference pour Dieu.

*Le point où mon bonheur se fonde,
Pèse bien plus que tout le monde.*

Fig. 2. Albert Flamen, "Embleme IV", in Gambart Adrien, *La vie symbolique du bienheureux François de Sales [...] Comprise sous le voile de 52 Emblemes [...]* (Paris, Aux frais de l'auteur: 1664) 12. Photo: courtesy Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia.

This transformation requires an exchange of hearts,⁴⁵ a phenomenon already described in the context of *lectio divina*, whereby the heart of Jesus is appropriated by His disciple. Although biblical in origin, exchange of hearts, in Francis's lifetime, was more associated with hagiography, as a mystical experience of saints like Catherine of Siena.⁴⁶ But Francis takes the exchange of hearts out of the realm of the extraordinary, and makes it integral to the lives of ordinary Christians by insisting that all are called to re-form their hearts according to the gentle and humble heart of Jesus. This is achieved by two means. The first is 'mental prayer and the prayer of the heart, particularly that centered on the life and Passion of our Lord. By often turning your eyes on Him in meditation, your whole soul will be filled with Him. You will learn His ways and form your actions after the pattern of His'.⁴⁷ And the second is the practice of what Francis calls the 'little virtues whose conquest our Lord has set forth for our care and labor, such as patience, gentleness, self-mortification, humility, obedience, poverty, chastity, compassion toward our neighbors, bearing with their imperfections, diligence, and holy fervor'.⁴⁸

The trope of the heart as a space for writing has a long tradition going back to the Old Testament. Closer to Francis's day, writing on the heart is a frequent and vivid image in medieval hagiographic, homiletic, devotional, and secular love literature.⁴⁹ In the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Francis uses this trope to create a word-picture of the human heart in the Salesian world of hearts.

'Be converted to Me', God said, 'with your whole heart' [*Joel* 2:12]. 'My son, give Me your heart' [*Proverbs* 23:26]. Since the heart is the source of our actions, as the heart is so are they. The divine Spouse invites the soul: 'Put Me', He says, 'as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm' [*Song of Songs*

⁴⁵ Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 33.

⁴⁶ On this phenomenon, see Cabassut A., "Cœurs, changement des", *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, 17 vols. (Paris: 1932–1995) II 2, cols. 1046–1051; and, more recently, Newman B., "Exchanging Hearts: A Medievalist Looks at Transplant Surgery", *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 12 (2012) 1–20.

⁴⁷ *Œuvres* 79 (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 2, chap. 1): 'la mentale et cordiale, et particulièrement celle qui se fait autour de la vie et Passion de Notre-Seigneur: en le regardant souvent par la méditation, toute votre âme se remplira de lui; vous apprendrez ses contenance, et formerez vos actions au modèle des siennes'.

⁴⁸ *Œuvres* 132 (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 3, chap. 2): 'petites vertus, la conquête desquelles Notre-Seigneur a exposée à notre soin et travail: comme la patience, la débonnaireté, la mortification du cœur, l'humilité, l'obéissance, la pauvreté, la chasteté, la tendreté envers le prochain, le support de ses imperfections, la diligence et sainte ferveur'.

⁴⁹ See Jager E., *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: 2000).

8:6]. Yes, for whoever has Jesus Christ in his heart will soon have Him in all his outward ways.

For this reason, dear Philothea, I have wished, above all else, to engrave and to inscribe on your heart this holy and sacred motto, 'Live Jesus!' I am certain that [...] just as this gentle Jesus will live within your heart, so too He will live in all your conduct [...]. And you will be able to say reverently, in imitation of Saint Paul, 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me' [*Galatians 2:20*].⁵⁰

This is one of two word-pictures of the human heart in the *Introduction*. The other, cited at the outset of this paper, is found in the *Introduction's* preface: in obedience to God's will, Francis, as bishop, paints devotion, which he defines as love of God and love of neighbor, in the human heart.⁵¹ Both images bring to the fore the spiritual formation required for the human heart to recover the ability to pulse in union with the divine Heart, together with Francis's role as a guide in this formative process.

The full meaning of the word-picture of Francis painting devotion in the heart is unlocked only when it is viewed in tandem with Francis's exegesis of *Genesis 1:26*. At the same time, it serves as a visual shorthand of this exegesis, which turns on two points.

First, according to Francis, the 'breath of life' that God breathes into Adam's nostrils is 'sacred charity',⁵² and 'having created man in His image and likeness, God wills that, like in Him, everything be ordered [in man] by love and for love'.⁵³ Thus, '[s]imultaneous with [...] being created in the divine trinitarian image of ecstatic love is [...] the double thrust of this love, towards God and neighbor'.⁵⁴ By restoring the *imago Dei* to its original luster by painting devotion – love of God and of neighbor – upon

⁵⁰ *Œuvres* 195 (*Introduction*, Part 3, chap. 23): 'Convertissez-vous à moi, dit Dieu, de tout votre cœur; Mon enfant, donne-moi ton cœur; car aussi, le cœur étant la source des actions, elles sont telles qu'il est. L'Epoux divin invitant l'âme, *Mets-moi*, dit-il, *comme un cachet sur ton cœur, comme un cachet sur ton bras*. Oui vraiment, car quiconque a Jésus-Christ en son cœur, il l'a bientôt après en toutes ses actions extérieures.

C'est pourquoy, chère Philothea, j'ai voulu avant toutes choses graver et inscrire sur votre cœur ce mot saint et sacré: Vive Jésus! assuré que [...] ce doux Jésus vivra dedans votre cœur, il vivra aussi en tous vos déportements [...]; et pourrez saintement dire, à la imitation de saint Paul: *Je vis, mais non plus moi, ains Jésus-Christ vit en moi*'.

⁵¹ *Œuvres* 32–33 (*Introduction*, Part 1, chap. 1).

⁵² *Œuvres* 901 (*Treatise*, Book 11, chap. 9): 'Dieu inspirât en icelui *le spiracle de vie*, c'est-à-dire la sacrée charité [...]'.

⁵³ *Œuvres* 368 (*Treatise*, Book 1, chap. 6): 'Dieu, ayant créé l'homme à son image et semblance, veut que, comme en lui, tout y soit ordonné par l'amour et pour l'amour'.

⁵⁴ Fiorelli L., "Salesian Understanding of Christian Anthropology", *Salesianum* 46 (1984) 487–508, esp. 501.

the heart, Francis collaborates with, and thus becomes a living image of God the Creator-Lover.

Second, Francis identifies the Son's specific role in Creation as 'image-maker', for 'He created us "in His own image and likeness"',⁵⁵ and in redemption as coming 'to repair by His Passion and death "the image and likeness of God" imprinted in us'.⁵⁶ As the painter of devotion, Francis the bishop stands *in persona Christi*, 'in the person of Christ', and thus shares in the Redeemer's salvific activity of restoring the image or portrait of God that was not totally destroyed, but whose 'colors [...] were extremely faded and discolored' by sin.⁵⁷ Francis's self-portrait as the painter of devotion is all the more poignant when juxtaposed with a striking emblematic portrayal of Christ's role as the restorer of the divine image in the human heart, such as Anton II Wierix's *Christ Painting the Four Last Things in the Human Heart* of 1585–1586 [Fig. 3].

The second word-picture – Francis engraving the sacred motto, 'Live Jesus!' in the heart – and the tapestry of scriptural verses that accompany it – from the prophet *Joel*, *Proverbs*, *Song of Songs*, and *Galatians* – is a *tour de force* of the kind of free association that is a hallmark of *lectio divina*.⁵⁸ While Francis lifts these verses out of their original context, he does not violate the sense of the original. Rather, he brings these verses into dialogue with one another, and then he links them to his word-image to create an emblematic process of mutual elucidation. Any of these Scripture verses could serve as the motto for the *pictura* of the heart engraved with 'Live Jesus!' to make an emblem. During the second half of the

⁵⁵ Annecy edition X 268 (Sermon for the Third Sunday of Lent, 27 Feb. 1622): 'qu'il nous a créés à son image et semblance'. Francis maintains that the form of the verb in *Genesis* 1:26, 'Let us make', indicates that all three persons of the blessed Trinity participated in Adam's creation (ibidem VII 5 [Sermon for the Feast of Pentecost, 6 June 1593]; cf. Pocetto A., "An Introduction to Salesian Anthropology", *Salesian Studies* 6.3 [Summer 1969] 36–62, esp. 36–37). While the Son is the image-maker, the Father is 'the source and origin' ('source et origine') of everything that is (Annecy edition VII 6), and the Holy Spirit is the 'breath of life' ('spiraculum vitae') who gives natural life at the first creation and graced life at the new creation wrought by Jesus Christ (ibidem VIII 230–231 [Sermon Plan on the Fourth and Fifth Verse of the Benedictus, Advent 1616]). See Fiorelli, "Salesian Understanding of Christian Anthropology" 490–491.

⁵⁶ Annecy edition X 273 (Sermon for the Third Sunday of Lent, 27 Feb. 1622): 'reparer par sa Mort et Passion l'image et semblance de Dieu imprimée en nous'. Also see Fiorelli, "Salesian Understanding of Christian Anthropology" 505.

⁵⁷ Annecy edition X 273: 'couleurs [...] estoient infiniment blasfardes et décolorées'. Also see Fiorelli, "Salesian Understanding of Christian Anthropology" 505.

⁵⁸ Leiva-Merikakis, "Are You Afraid of the Thief?" 458–459; and Thompson C., *St. John of the Cross: Songs in the Night* (Washington, DC: 2003) 150–51, 178.



Fig. 3. Anton II Wierix, "Christ Painting the Four Last Things in the Human Heart" (1585–1586), engraving in Binet E., and Luzvic E., *Cor Deo devotum Iesu pacifici Salomonis thronus regius* (Antwerp, Apud Henricum Aertssium: 1628) 114. Photo: courtesy Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia.

seventeenth century, the Observant Franciscan friar François Berthod, whose images are among the most striking in the emblematic tradition, created such an emblem: the *pictura* of a heart engraved with the holy name of Jesus, held by a hand coming out of a cloud, is accompanied by the motto, 'Put me as a seal on your heart [...]'] ('Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum [...]'] (*Song of Songs* 8:6) [Fig. 4].⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Berthod F., *Emblemes sacrez, tirez de l'Ecriture Sainte et des Peres [...] Seconde partie* (Paris, Chez Estienne Loyson: 1665) 328 (Embleme XLIV).



Fig. 4. "Embleme XLIV", in Berthod François, *Emblemes sacrez, tirez de l'Ecriture Sainte et des Peres [...]* Seconde partie (Paris, Chez Estienne Loyson: 1665) 328. Photo: courtesy Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia.

Complementing Francis's picturing of the human heart are the three major word-pictures that he crafted from his appropriation of iconic Gospel portraits of the heart of Jesus in *lectio divina*. These word-images are perhaps best viewed as a 'virtual triptych', read from left to right. More specifically, this virtual triptych functions as a *machina memorialis*, that is, as a matrix, scheme, or pattern that is a vehicle that facilitates the organization and recall of Salesian mental images and the ideas associated with them.⁶⁰

On the left panel is the traditional icon of the Beloved Disciple resting upon the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, which, as we have seen, inspired and sustained Francis's daily meditative-contemplative prayer. John, the youngest of the Apostles, is here in the likeness of the young Francis de Sales. But the efficacy of this practice of repose is not limited to Francis, as he avers in the *Treatise on the Love of God*, when he comments on the Gospel image and explains this form of prayer in light of his own experience.

Painters usually portray the beloved Saint John at the Last Supper not merely as resting but as sleeping on his Master's breast. This is because he was seated in the eastern manner so that his head was towards his dear Friend's breast. There he slept no natural sleep, for there was no likelihood of that. I also do not doubt that finding himself so close to the breast of eternal gentleness, he fell into a deep, mystic, and untroubled sleep. [...]

So, when you are in this state of simple and pure childlike trust in our Lord's presence, remain there, my dear Theotimus, without moving to make any conscious acts, whether of intellect or will. This simple trustful love and this loving slumber of your spirit in the Savior's arms contains to a superlative degree all that you go seeking now here, now there to satisfy your desires. It is better to sleep upon that sacred breast than to be awake elsewhere, no matter where it may be.⁶¹

⁶⁰ See Carruthers M., *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (New York: 1998) 1–10, 22–24, 92–94. I am grateful to Professor Walter S. Melion for this suggestion and reference. My formulation of this point, as well as of the triptych's center panel, was refined in discussion with Liam J. Leyden, editorial intern and research assistant at Saint Joseph's University Press. The conceptualization of the center panel has likewise benefitted from conversation with Bro. Daniel Wisniewski, OSFS, and Fr. Joseph Boenzi, SDB.

⁶¹ *Œuvres* 634 (*Treatise*, Book 6, chap. 8): 'Les peintres peignent ordinairement le bien-aimé saint Jean, en la Cène, non seulement reposant, mais dormant sur la poitrine de son Maître; parce qu'il y fut assis à la façon des Levantins, en sorte que sa tête tendait vers le sein de son cher Amant, sur lequel, comme il ne dormait pas du sommeil corporel, n'y ayant aucune vraisemblance en cela, aussi ne douté-je point que se trouvant si près des mamelles, de la douceur éternelle, il n'y fit un profond, mystique et doux sommeil. [...]

Quand donc vous serez en cette simple et pure confiance filiale auprès de Notre-Seigneur, demeurez-y, mon cher Théotime, sans vous remuer nullement pour faire des

In the center panel is the most well-known of all Salesian icons: the Jesus of *Matthew* 11:29, who invites all, 'Come to Me, [...] and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart'. According to Saint Augustine (354–430), who was Francis's favorite among the Church Fathers,⁶² Jesus speaks in this pericope as Wisdom incarnate 'through whom all things were made' [*John* 1:3].⁶³ In the heart of Jesus is discovered that 'at the center of the Divine Being, and therefore at the very center of reality, there dwell Gentleness and Humility. Such is the innermost secret of the Creator God and King of the Universe: at the very Heart of the divine omnipotence there is active an infinite tenderness and compassion'.⁶⁴ Jesus is both the model teacher and the lesson to be mastered, and the disciple is to be committed to the lifelong opening of the heart so as to be transformed and inhabited by Jesus's own gentle and humble heart, thereby restoring the divine image and likeness.⁶⁵

The word-pictures composed by Francis and viewed on the triptych's left panel (see above) and right panel (see below) are 'narrative' and have a scriptural provenance; that in the central panel, however, is emblematic and derives from the Church's sacramental life, specifically the use of chrism, which Francis invokes to explicate *Matthew* 11:29. Chrism is employed in the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism (the crown of the head of the newly baptized is anointed with chrism), Confirmation (the forehead of the person confirmed is anointed with chrism), and Holy Orders (the head and hands of a bishop at his consecration are anointed, and the hands of a priest at his ordination); it is also used in other solemn rites, such as the consecration of churches, bells, chalices and patens. In Francis's most authoritative and concise commentary on *Matthew* 11:29, in the *Introduction*, Part 3, chapter 8, he crafts this word-picture:

actes sensibles ni de l'entendement ni de la volonté; car cet amour simple de confiance et cet endormissement amoureux de votre esprit entre les bras du Sauveur, comprend par excellence tout ce que vous allez cherchant çà et là pour votre goût. Il est mieux de dormir sur cette sacrée poitrine que de veiller ailleurs, où que ce soit'.

⁶² See, for example, Marceau W., "St. Francis de Sales and the Fathers," in Kolencherry A. (ed.), *The Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales: Its Sources and Influences*, Studies in Salesian Spirituality 4 (Bangalore: 1985) 48–60.

⁶³ Saint Augustine, *The Trinity (De Trinitate)*, trans. E. Hill – ed. J. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: 1991) 222 (Book 7, chap. 2).

⁶⁴ Leiva-Merikakis E., *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Vol. 1, Chapters 1–11* (San Francisco: 1996) 727.

⁶⁵ Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 33–34; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word* 727.

Holy chrism, which by apostolic tradition is used in the Church of God for confirmations and consecrations, is made up of olive oil mixed with balm, which, among other things, represents the two favorite and beloved virtues that shone forth in the sacred person of our Lord. He has singularly recommended them to us so as to indicate by them that our hearts must be particularly consecrated to His service and dedicated to His imitation: 'Learn of Me', He says, 'for I am gentle and humble of heart' [*Matthew 11:29*]. Humility perfects us with respect to God, and gentleness with respect to our neighbor. Balm, which [...] always sinks deeper than any other liquid, symbolizes humility, and olive oil, which always rises to the top, symbolizes gentleness, which rises above all things and stands out among the virtues as the flower of charity [...].⁶⁶

Mystagogy is catechesis that 'aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ [...] by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the "sacraments" to the "mysteries"'.⁶⁷ Francis here provides a mystagogy on Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders – three sacraments that 'confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental *character* or "seal" by which the Christian shares in Christ's priesthood and is made a member of the Church according to different states and functions'.⁶⁸ Francis's mystagogy takes the form of a word-emblem.

Chrism is the most sacred of the three holy oils (the others being the oil of catechumens and the oil of the sick), and no one but a bishop is allowed to consecrate it. As part of this rite, celebrated annually on Holy Thursday, the bishop mixes oil with balsam to make chrism, and so Francis would have observed the properties of chrism's ingredients firsthand.⁶⁹ 'Radically the word *chrism* is identical with the name Christ, since

⁶⁶ *Œuvres* 152 (*Introduction*, Part 3, chap. 8): 'Le saint chrême, duquel par tradition apostolique on use en l'Église de Dieu pour les confirmations et bénédications, est composé d'huile d'olive mêlée avec le baume, qui représente entre autres choses les deux chères et bien aimées vertus qui reluisaient en la sacrée Personne de Notre-Seigneur, lesquelles il nous a singulièrement recommandées, comme si par icelles notre cœur devait être spécialement consacré à son service et appliqué à son imitation: *Apprenez de moi*, dit-il, *que je suis doux et humble de cœur*. L'humilité nous perfectionne envers Dieu, et la douceur envers le prochain. Le baume (qui [...] prend toujours le dessous parmi toutes les liqueurs) représente l'humilité, et l'huile d'olive, qui prend toujours le dessus, représente la douceur et débonnairété, laquelle surmonte toutes choses et excelle entre les vertus comme étant la fleur de la charité [...]'.

⁶⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York 1994), no. 1075.

⁶⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1121. On Francis's sermons on the Eucharist during the Chablais mission as mystagogy, see Cryan J., "Francis de Sales, Mystagogue: A Commentary on the Dogmatic Sermons on the Eucharist (July 1597)", in St. Francis de Sales, *Sermons on the Eucharist*, trans. T. Dailey (Center Valley, PA: 2004) 30–41.

⁶⁹ Tyrer J., *Historical Survey of Holy Week: Its Services and Ceremonial*, Alcuin Club Collections 29 (London: 1932) 96–105.

both are derivations from the Greek *kriein*, to anoint'.⁷⁰ Anointing with chrism brings about sanctification:⁷¹ union with Christ and grace, as will be further explained below. Consequently, Francis's adoption of chrism to explicate *Matthew* 11:29, in which Jesus reveals the 'innermost secret'⁷² of His being – the humility and gentleness of His heart – and invites His disciples to shape their hearts in the image and likeness of His, could not be more apt.

It is likely that, in Francis's experience, chrism would have been kept in a gold or silver ampulla or vessel. However, given Francis's graphic description of chrism's composition, it is perhaps best visualized in the Salesian triptych's center panel as contained in a crystal urn (as is often the practice today), etched with the letters S.C. for the words *Sacrum Chrisma*, so as to allow it to be seen as the sacred symbol it is. An emblem is formed by adding to this *pictura* the motto, 'Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde' [*Matthew* 11:29: 'Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart'), and an epigram that makes explicit the emblem's meaning: 'Le baume (qui [...] prend toujours le dessous parmi toutes les liqueurs) représente l'humilité, et l'huile d'olive, qui prend toujours le dessus, représente la douceur et débonnairété, laquelle surmonte toutes choses et excelle entre les vertus comme étant la fleur de la charité [...].' ('Balm, which [...] always sinks deeper than any other liquid, symbolizes humility, and olive oil, which always rises to the top, symbolizes gentleness, which rises above all things and stands out among the virtues as the flower of charity [...]').⁷³

In the early modern era, the most widely disseminated text on the symbolism of chrism was the *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests* (1566). Francis's exposition of chrism's significance concurs with, but also builds and expands on the *Catechism's* emphasis on the link between chrism and, first of all, Christ, and, then, the virtues. With regard to the former, the *Catechism* affirms in its instruction on Baptism and Confirmation:

After the person has been baptized, the priest anoints the crown of his head with chrism, thus giving him to understand, that from that day he is united as a member to Christ, His Head, and ingrafted on His body; and

⁷⁰ Parsch P., *The Church's Year of Grace, Vol. 2: Septuagesima to Holy Saturday*, trans. D. Coogan – R. Kraus, (Collegeville, MN: 1953) 324.

⁷¹ Parsch, *The Church's Year of Grace* 324.

⁷² Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word* 727.

⁷³ *Œuvres* 152 (*Introduction*, Part 3, chap. 8).

that he is, therefore, called a Christian from Christ, as Christ is so called from chrism.⁷⁴

Nor indeed could any other matter than that of chrism seem more appropriate to declare the effects of [the] Sacrament [of Confirmation]. Oil, by its nature rich, unctuous and fluid, expresses the fulness of grace, which, through the Holy Ghost, overflows and is poured into others from Christ the head [...].⁷⁵

Moreover, oil's unctuousness is complemented by balm's fragrance, which symbolizes 'that the faithful, when made perfect by the grace of Confirmation, diffuse around them such a sweet odor of all virtues, that they may say with the Apostle: 'We are unto God the good odour of Christ' [2 *Corinthians* 2:15].⁷⁶

Francis integrates these themes of the Tridentine *Catechism's* teaching to amplify the Christological symbolism of chrism by identifying and correlating the properties of its ingredients of balm and olive oil with humility and gentleness respectively, which Jesus reveals in *Matthew* 11:29 as the particular virtues of His heart. This is of the greatest importance for the Christian's sacramental incorporation and conformation to Christ: the living out of the sacramental consecration of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders is inseparable from the practice of the primordial Christological virtues of humility before God and gentleness toward neighbor. Francis's mystagogy catapults the Salesian doctrine of the preeminence of the virtues of humility and gentleness out of the realm of personal piety, while giving it a solid theological foundation by firmly rooting it in the mystery of Christ, the apostolic tradition, and the Church's sacramental life.

In the right lateral panel of the virtual Salesian triptych is a word-picture of Jesus's heart that is a pendant to that of the human heart engraved with 'Live Jesus!' In fact, these two complementary images could form a diptych. This third word-portrait occurs in a sermon preached by Francis on the Second Sunday of Lent 1622, the final year of his life, and in which he offers a vision of heaven. Like the Salesian world of hearts, Francis's vision of heaven is also profoundly relational. Consistent with Francis's idea that human friendships rooted in God are eternal and

⁷⁴ *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests Issued by Order of Pope Pius V*, trans. J. McHugh – C. Callan (New York: 1923; reprint ed., South Bend, IN: 1972) 196.

⁷⁵ *Catechism of the Council of Trent* 203. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1289: "This anointing [with chrism] highlights the name "Christian," which means "anointed" and derives from that of Christ Himself whom God "anointed with the Holy Spirit" [Acts 10:38]."

⁷⁶ *Catechism of the Council of Trent* 203.

continue in the next life,⁷⁷ eternal beatitude is imagined as a reunion with those loved in life, as well as loving communication with the saints and even the Persons of the blessed Trinity. Francis's sermon culminates in a remarkable passage, in which he imagines encounter with the glorified Jesus, who, in a gesture of loving intimacy, allows the blessed to glimpse His heart and the reciprocal love that burns there.

Let us pass on, [...] and say a few words about the honor and grace that we will have in conversing even with our incarnate Lord. [...] What will we do, [...] what will we become, I ask you, when through the sacred wound of His side we behold that most adorable and most lovable heart of our Master, aflame with His love for us – that Heart where we will see each of our names written in letters of love? 'Is it possible, O my dear Savior', we will say, 'that You have loved me so much that You have engraved my name in Your heart!' It is indeed true. The Prophet, speaking in the name of Our Lord, says to us: 'Even if it should happen that a mother forget the child she carried in her womb, I will never forget you, for I have engraved your name on the palms of my hands' [*Isaiah* 49:15–16]. But Jesus Christ Himself, enlarging on these words, will say: 'Even if it were possible for a woman to forget her child, yet I will never forget you, since I bear your name engraved in My heart'.⁷⁸

This word-picture, rooted in *Isaiah* 49:15–16, is likewise a natural development of the idea, presented in the *Treatise on the Love of God* (Book 12, chapter 12), that when Jesus accomplished the redemption of humankind on the cross, He did not save an anonymous mass of humanity, but 'knew each of us by name and surname'.⁷⁹ Perhaps it is also in some

⁷⁷ See, for example, *Œuvres* 184 (*Introduction*, Part 3, chap. 19); Annecy edition XVIII 25–27 (letter to the widow of the President of Sautereau, 21 June 1617). Also see Wisniewski D., "Chains of Love: The Eternity of Friendship in the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales", in Chorpenning J. (ed.), *Encountering Anew the Familiar: Francis de Sales's "Introduction to the Devout Life" at 400 Years* (Rome: 2012) 95–110.

⁷⁸ Annecy edition X 243–44: 'Passons plus outre, [...] et disons un peu quelques mots de l'honneur et de la grace que nous aurons de converser mesme avec Nostre Seigneur humanisé. [...] Que ferons-nous, [...] que deviendrons-nous, je vous prie, quand à travers la playe sacrée de son costé nous appercevrons ce cœur tres adorable et tres aymable de nostre Maistre, tout ardent de l'amour qu'il nous porte, cœur auquel nous verrons tous nos noms escrits en lettres d'amour? Est-il possible, dirons-nous, o mon cher Sauveur, que vous m'ayez tant aymé que d'avoir gravé mon nom en vostre cœur! Cela est pourtant veritable. Le Prophete, parlant en la personne de Nostre Seigneur, nous dit: *Quand il arriveroit que la mere oublieroit l'enfant qu'elle porte en ses entrailles, si ne t'oublieray-je point, car j'ay gravé ton nom en mes mains*. Mais Jesus Christ luy mesme encherissant sur ces paroles dira: *S'il se pouvoit faire que la femme oubliast son enfant, si ne t'oublieray-je pas, d'autant que je porte ton nom gravé en mon cœur*'.

⁷⁹ *Œuvres* 970 (*Treatise*, Book 12, chap. 12): 'nous connaissait tous par nom et par surnom'.

way Francis's contemplative interpretation of the great Johannine icon, which, throughout Christian tradition, has been read in connection with the heart of Jesus: 'one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. [...] For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, [...] "They shall look on him whom they have pierced"' (*John* 19:34–37).⁸⁰ Viewed together with the *Introduction's* word-image of the human heart engraved with 'Live Jesus!', Francis's word-portrait of the glorified Christ revealing His heart as inscribed with the names of humanity is a striking example of his thought process, as it discloses how Francis reflected on, developed, and amplified a single insight over a number of years. It also represents Francis's mature thought, articulated just nine months before his death.

Conclusion

In his writings and sermons, Francis de Sales illustrates the dynamic inter-connection of human and divine hearts by composing a series of vivid and memorable word-pictures to be beheld in the mind's eye of his reader or listener. This picturing was the fruit of Francis's experience and prayer, especially his lifelong daily practice of resting in, mediating upon, and contemplating the heart of Jesus, in imitation of John the Beloved at the Last Supper. The resultant Salesian world or universe of interconnected hearts, in which primacy is given to the re-forming of human hearts according to the gentle and humble heart of the loving Savior, stands in stark contrast to militant Catholicism, with its view of a vengeful, punitive God and its ethos of violence, religious anxiety, and rigorous penitential asceticism. Francis's ministry as a priest and bishop was dedicated to reforming militant Catholicism by establishing pockets of resistance within French Catholicism, principally through the monasteries of the Visitation Order established in France.

These two currents would continue to dominate French Catholicism, with one leading to Jansenism and the other to the liturgical cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which comes about as a result of the apparitions

⁸⁰ See, for example, Stierli J. (ed.), *Heart of the Saviour: A Symposium on Devotion to the Sacred Heart*, trans. P. Andrews (New York: 1958), *passim*; and Heer J., "The Soteriological Significance of the Johannine Image of the Pierced Savior", in Scheffczyk L. (ed.), *Faith in Christ and the Worship of Christ: New Approaches to Devotion to Christ*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco – Milwaukee: 1986) 33–46.

in the 1670s to the young Visitandine nun Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–1690) at Paray-le-Monial. Of course, Jansenism vigorously opposed the Sacred Heart devotion, which ultimately came to be regarded by the Church as the antidote for the Jansenist heresy. Perhaps key to this devotion prevailing was its simultaneous focus on the heart of Jesus aflame with love for sinful humanity and on human reparation. But the latter was not militant Catholicism's harsh penitential asceticism. Rather, it consisted of faithful observance of the annual feast of the Sacred Heart, reception of Holy Communion on the First Friday of every month (which was specially dedicated to the Sacred Heart), an hour's vigil (Holy Hour) of adoration of the Eucharist (the material substance in which Jesus's heart lives) on the night preceding the feast of the Sacred Heart and the first Friday of each month, and public exposition and veneration of the image of Jesus's Heart so that human hearts might be touched and moved by the sight of this emblem of divine love.

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COLOR PLATES



[PLATE 2. SMITH – Fig 1, p. 46]





[PLATE 4. NATIVEL – Fig. 1, p. 137]





[PLATE 6. ROTHSTEIN – Fig. 1, p. 190]





[PLATE 8. MELION – Fig. 5, p. 220]





[PLATE 10. WEEMANS – Fig. 1, p. 274]





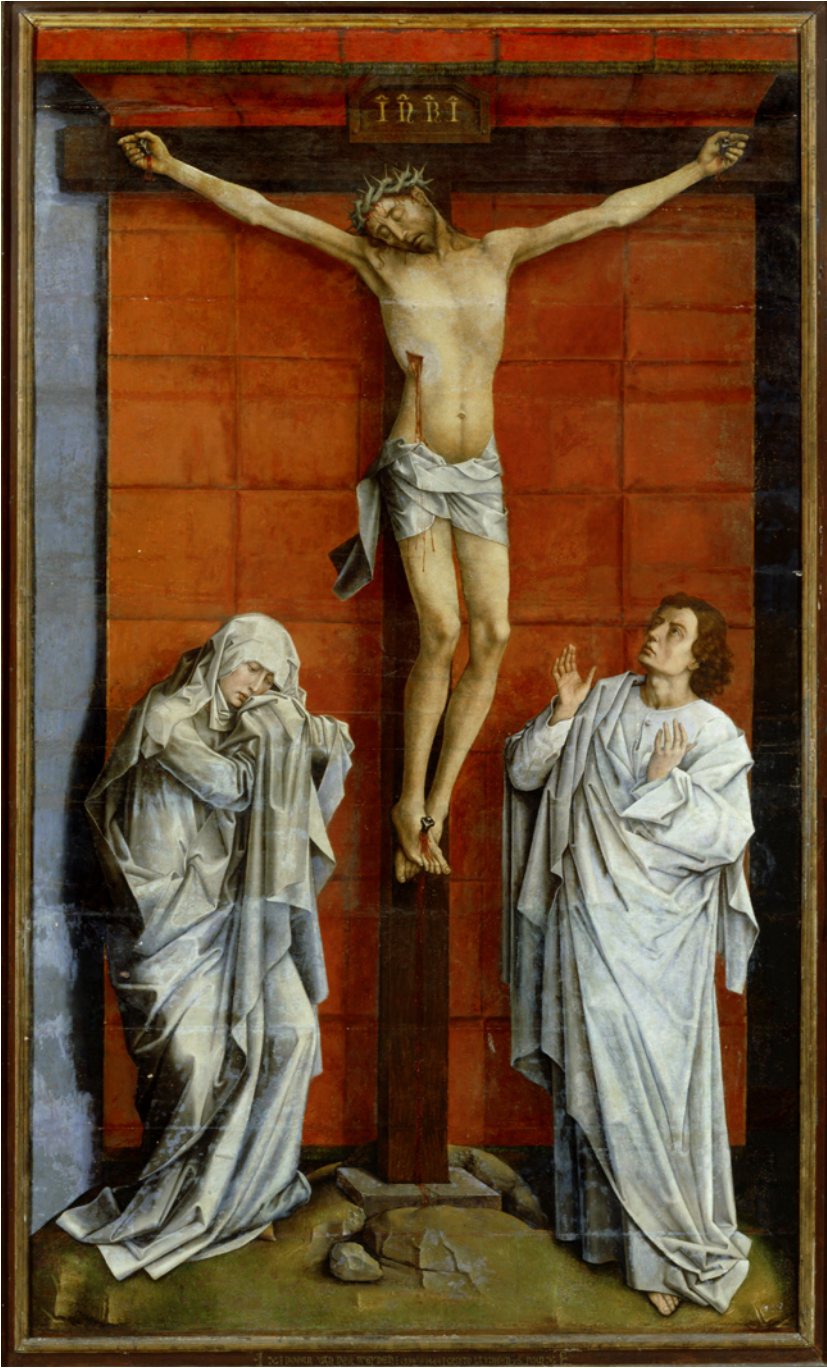








[PLATE 16. WISE – Fig. 1, p. 389]







Iacob der patriarch als vor geschribt stet. der mußt vor seinen wüder elau flüchtag werden. vñ thom zu seinem dharm. der hiez laban. dem dient er vier gehen jar. vñ darnach.

da er wider haim wolt zehren. da sprach er zu seinen zwain hawstrawen rachelen vñ haim also. Ich sich das ewr pater nicht gen mir gepart als ich an im geworpin. wir sullen vñ hinnen ziehen. Da sprachen die frawen paid. Was ist war er hat sich vñ her. Zehant siren si mir aller hal die si gehabe mochten vñ de vater vñ vñ der müter haimleich an vñ laub. Da im iacob dharm von dann entwie vere. hern laban wart gefant sein anten für dahn. das tee im zorn vñ macher sich aus mit den seinen vñ für im nach vñ straffer in vñ die genat. Da laut im iacob die genat vñ lachd dar vñb er es her gefant. das nam er da se gut. doch was iacob in lorgen auf seinen wüder elau. wie er von dem dharm. Da erscham im ein engel. vñ rangt mit im pñ an den tag vñ mochte in nicht überwinden. vñ sprach zu im. Pilt du gen got als starkh gewesen du fürcht dir nicht vor den lauten. du hantest nimm iacob. fürbaz ist israhel dein nam. also sprach er von im. **I**acob betraut sand thoman der mit glauben wolt das vñ her vñ dem tod war er standen. als iacob der

nicht getraut wolt das in got gen seinem wüder elau mochte behuldigen. mit dem rang des engels. das ist ielus cristus d' sant thoman sein hant nam. vñ in die legt in die wunden seiner seiten. vñ die vinger in die nager löcher seiner hend. vñ sprach zu im. Als nicht vngeläubig wā ich es pin. Zehant rufft er. asen her vñ mein got. da ward er israhel genant. das ist gesprochen. vñ der got lichte. wā er got lach vñ erhat. Dar über spricht dauid. Herr getraut die sel deines dieners wā ich han mich zu dir gericht. Es spricht jeremias. Der beher dich zu vñ so beheru wir vñ zu dir.

Der engel ringt mit iacob



Da greift sand thoman vñ in sein seiten

Dauid



Jeremias



Hier geschie die sit

Der beher dich sit vñ



Elias



Osee



vñ wirt mein dien erphahent

Ein puch das hauer iudicum. das ist der richter. in dem list man vñ anten der hies gedon. dem erscham ein engel aus

Gedon

der engel



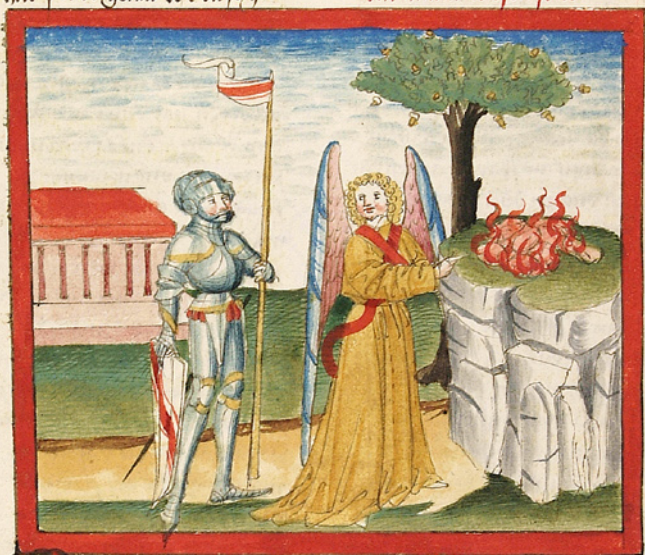
angls. da er stand in seinem stadt. da man im sein wartent fürbat vñ sprach zu im Got sey mir dir du aller sterker man. Des antwort im gedon vñ sprach. Ich wider. dñe thag das gelein das got mit vñ sey in so vil dñs das vñ begreife hat. wā vñ beut die lüge vñs oh mit alle lachd. Da sprach der engel. der vñb pin ich thomen zu dir vñ wñ dich wñen wie du geuaru salt. vñ gab im für die weg wie er sich salt an rñten. Dar nach nam gedon zu im ein groß volk. wol hundert tausend man vñd zoch mit den se veld den den vñten. Da sprach got zu im. Der volk ist se vil. thom si se samen vñ geligent. so ge bent si den lig in selber. vñd wir nicht. für das volk zu dem wasser. vñ wñlich sich wider

legent vñ trinkhet. die lag all wider haim zehren. welhe aber das wasser mit der hant in den munt werffent die behab per dir. Da pliben nur vier hundert man die das tzen. die nam er zu im. vñ hiez ledleichen ein lageln an sich henten. vñd in luecht nemen in sein hant. vñd in vñrenten vñd der die vent mit geschray ank si vallen vñ rufft. Hye gedon vñd gotz volk. Da erschrecken die vent vñd wurden all flüchtag vñd vil erschlagen. also geligt er vñd ward herr über das volk. Gedon bezauch sand thoman der hant gelaut dem engel. das ist ielus cristus der sand thoman zu dem glauben prachte vñd im rangt. den wunden vñ sprach. Du pist salig das du gelaubest. salig sind all die gelaubent vñ er nicht gelichen habent. Dar über spricht Elias. Ich han in gelichen vñ han in her wider pracht. Es spricht Osee. Du wirt mich fürchtend vñd wirt meinen diener erphahent.

Ich biest war in erlösch ich ist
 my geliebt ist das inderst in
 manasse und ich der mynste in
 dem huse myn vater Und der
 heil sprach zu im Ich werd mit
 dir und du stehst madau als
 ante man Und er sprach ob ich
 hab frunde genad vor dir so ge

nu am sache das du es bist du
 da edest zu mir Mit schande him
 vng ich wyderfere zu in das ich
 bring das offer vnd offer dir Er
 antwortet ich bair zu dir zu fuge

*Wie der engel des heil gedon er
 scham und im stunde das er ist
 von madau erlösen solte*



Gedon gung in und so d an
 zuckin vnd der bier vo
 mid mas melbe vnd legt die sta
 ist in am vaf vnd die beine des
 stähtes heil er in dem hase
 vnd teig alle dray vnd die

man vnd bracht ins Der engel
 des heil sprach zu im Ich die
 stäht vnd die der bier vnd leg
 so vff ihen stam vnd giff tar
 luff die beine Und da er hat
 getan also Der Engel des heil





IV. READING THE BIBLE THROUGH IMAGES

ILLUMINATION OF IMAGES AND ILLUMINATION THROUGH THE IMAGE – FUNCTIONS AND CONCEPTS OF GOSPEL ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE BIBLE OF THE NUREMBERG PATRICIAN MARTIN PFINZING

Maria Deiters

One of the most momentous phenomena brought about by the Reformation was the Bible's placement at the centre of faith, turning it into the principal book of devotion. At the same time, the Reformation opened up the laity's individual access to the Bible to an unprecedented extent, facilitated by tenets such as the 'priesthood of all believers', 'self-exegesis', and 'clarity of Scripture'.¹ However, comparatively little research has been undertaken on the effects generated by these changes on the practices by which the Bible and its tenets came to be appropriated, the role images played in these processes, and – conversely – the impact these processes had on the illustration of the Bible.

In order to approach these questions, it is particularly fruitful to turn our attention to two types of texts. First, the so-called House or Family Bibles, which bear concrete traces of the ways in which their owners read, used, and altered them, provide rich evidence for an investigation of practices of devotion and appropriation.² Second, there is a substantial amount

¹ Reinitzer H., *Biblia deutsch. Luthers Bibelübersetzung und ihre Tradition* [exh. cat., Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg] (Brunswick: 1983); Beutel A., "Erfahrene Bibel. Verständnis und Gebrauch des verbum dei scriptum bei Luther", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 89 (1992) 302–339; Schreiner K., "Volkstümliche Bibelmagie und volkssprachliche Bibellektüre. Theologische und soziale Probleme mittelalterlicher Laienfrömmigkeit", in Dinzelbacher P. – Bauer P. (eds.), *Volksreligion im hohen und späten Mittelalter* (Paderborn et al.: 1990) 329–373. A more sceptical approach is taken by Gawthorp R. – Strauss G., "Protestantism and Literacy in Early Modern Germany", *Past and Present* 104 (1984) 31–55, who advance the thesis that Luther – in fear of false exegesis – came to reject the concept of the possibility for everyone to be able to read the Bible. Instead, they argue, he promoted the catechism.

² 'User's traces' in Bibles are analyzed by Reinitzer, H., "Leserspuren in Bibeln", *Wolfenbütteler Beiträge* 13 (2005) 149–251; Rublack U., "Grapho-Relics: Lutheranism and the Materialization of the Word", *Past and Present* 206, supp. 5 (2010) 144–166. For single, outstanding examples of Family Bibles, see Schauerte T., "Die Luther-Bibel des Hans Ulrich Krafft. Ein Fund von Autographen Luthers, Melanchthons, Cranachs und Dürers in der Herzog August Bibliothek und ihre illustre Provenienz", *Wolfenbütteler Beiträge* 13 (2005) 255–308; and especially the Bible of Hans Plock, for which see Deiters M., "Bible, Image, Artist – The Bible of Hans Plock", in François, W. – Hollander A.A. den (eds.), *Wading*

of edifying and devotional literature – such as postils and *summaria* – that made the Bible accessible and intelligible to the laity. These publications formed a crucial and hitherto largely neglected forum for biblical illustrations and combinations of texts and images conceived to serve catechetical purposes and to elicit particular devotional responses.³ Therefore, this genre also offered rich opportunities for experimenting with these visual strategies.

In my paper I shall be concentrating on a work in which both types overlap: the Bible of the Pfinzing family, which formed part of the patrician elite of the imperial city of Nuremberg. Prior to 1570, the Nuremberg councillor and merchant Martin Pfinzing purchased a print copy of the Luther Bible and had it lavishly altered and transformed. Numerous prints and miniatures by prominent artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Jost Amman and Virgil Solis were inserted into the book. The images were linked with an extensive textual commentary. A further important component of the Bible formed a genealogical book – a ‘Geschlechterbuch’ – of the Pfinzings with a series of portraits of the family and its ancestors and an elaborate foreword which provided a textual nexus between Bible and familial history. Through its complex program of images and texts, the Pfinzing Bible is placed within a manifold functional context of familial display and commemoration, of ethical instruction, and of familial piety. As the program evinces a distinctly systematic structure, it is especially suited for an analysis of the functions and strategies of images. Within the framework of this paper I will have to confine myself to an analysis of merely one aspect of the Pfinzing Bible’s complex program.⁴

Lambs and Swimming Elephants’: The Bible for the Laity and Theologians in the Medieval and Early Modern Era, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium 257 (Leuven: 2012) 153–180. See preliminarily Baensch T. (ed.), *Vom Kardinalsornat zu Luther-Bibel: Kunst und Leben des Seidenstickers Hans Plock im Spannungsfeld der Reformation* [exh. cat., Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin] (Berlin: 2005); Riepertinger R. et al. (eds.), *Das Rätsel Grünewald* [exh. cat., Schloß Johannisburg Aschaffenburg] (Augsburg: 2002) 254–266, with full bibliography.

³ See Bottigheimer R.B., “Bible Reading, ‘Bibles’ and the Bible for Children in Early Modern Germany”, *Past and Present* 139 (1993) 66–89; Engammare M., “Les figures de la Bible. Le destin oublié d’un genre littéraire en image (XVI^e–XVII^e s.)”, *Mélanges d’Ecole française de Rome* 106 (1994) 549–591; Coelen P. van der, *Bilder aus der Schrift. Studien zur alttestamentlichen Druckgrafik des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Vestigia Bibliæ 2 (Bern et al.: 2001); Münch B.U., *Geteiltes Leid. Die Passion Christi in Bildern und Texten der Konfessionalisierung. Druckgraphik von der Reformation bis zu den jesuitischen Großprojekten um 1600* (Regensburg: 2009).

⁴ A detailed description and analysis of the pictorial and textual program of the Pfinzing Bible (Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv) is provided by Deiters M. “Die Familie

The collage of the Pfinzing Bible is based on a print edition of the complete text of Luther's translation of the Bible published by Sigmund Feyerabend in Frankfurt am Main in 1561. His publishing house was arguably the most important one among those which printed Luther's Bible outside Wittenberg during the sixteenth century. Between 1560 and 1590 Feyerabend published numerous Bible editions, mostly to a high visual standard. Not only because of their large print run but also on account of their illustrations, these Bibles became important for the dissemination of Luther's Bible. Feyerabend himself had been a block-cutter and collaborated with prominent artists such as Virgil Solis and Jost Amman, who also illustrated other works published by him.⁵

The 1561 edition was printed in the distinguished folio format and illustrated with woodcuts by Virgil Solis. The selection of images largely followed the canon established by the Wittenberg Luther Bibles, according to which the Old Testament was illustrated comparatively densely whereas the New Testament received only a few images.⁶ However, in the

in der Bibel. Lutherische Bibelrezeption und Bildpraxis am Beispiel der Bibel der Nürnberger Patrizierfamilie Pfinzing", in Deiters M. – Wetter E. (eds.), *Bild und Konfession im östlichen Mitteleuropa*. (Ostfildern: 2013) 283–402. My investigation of the Pfinzing Bible formed part of the research project "Bild und Konfession. Bilder und Bildkonzepte im Rahmen der europäischen Konfessionalisierungsprozesse" ("Image and Confession. Images and pictorial concepts within the framework of the Confessionalization processes in Europe"), generously funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and based at the Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum für Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas an der Universität Leipzig (GWZO; Research Center for the History and Culture of East Central Europe at the University of Leipzig). I would like to express my gratitude to Walter Melion und Michel Weemans for offering me the opportunity to present some results of my research at the Corinth Colloquium. I also thank Andreas Puth (GWZO) for his informed and thoughtful translation of my paper into English.

⁵ On Sigmund Feyerabend, see Pallmann, H., *Sigmund Feyerabend, sein Leben und seine geschäftlichen Verbindungen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Frankfurter Buchhandels im 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a. Main: 1881). For Jost Amman's and Virgil Solis's illustrations for Feyerabend's publications, see O'Dell-Franke, I., *Kupferstiche und Radierungen aus der Werkstatt des Virgil Solis* (Wiesbaden 1977); eadem, *Jost Ammans Buchschmuck-Holzschnitte für Sigmund Feyerabend. Zur Technik der Verwendung von Bild-Holzstöcken in den Drucken von 1563–1599* (Wiesbaden: 1993); eadem, *Wappen-Holzschnitte Jost Ammans für Sigmund Feyerabend in Widmungsvorreden und Wappenbüchern* (London: 2007); Seelig G. (comp.), *The New Hollstein German Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts, 1400–1700. Vol. V: Jost Amman. Book Illustrations*, ed. G. Bartrum, 11 vols. (Rotterdam: 2002–2003); Beaujean D. (comp.), *Hollstein's German Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts, 1400–1700. Vol. LXVI: Virgil Solis. Book Illustrations*, ed. G. Bartrum, 5 vols. (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: 2006).

⁶ For this Bible edition – illustrated by Virgil Solis – and its program, see Oertel H., "Die Frankfurter Feyerabend-Bibeln und die Nürnberger Endter-Bibeln", *Mitteilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 70 (1983) 75–114; Schmidt P., *Die Illustration der Lutherbibel 1522–1700. Ein Stück abendländische Kultur- und Kirchengeschichte* (Basel: 1977) 236–243.

Pfinzing Bible this program underwent a significant extension: in accordance with Martin Pfinzing's commission, additional leaves were bound in between the pages of the Bible text. Each of these additional leaves displays a glued-in pair of images on its front. On their backs are to be found commentaries written in catchy rhymes and referring to the biblical passage in question. Especially in the New Testament, an additional interconnection with the printed biblical text is generated by highlighting and underlining its relevant passages in gold.

The scheme of the Pfinzing Bible's sequences of text – image – text is exemplified here by the illustrations of, and commentaries on, the seventh chapter of the *Gospel of Matthew*. Reproduced are the illustrations of the parable of the tree and its fruits (*Matthew* 7:15–20) and the miracle of the cleansing of a leper (*Matthew* 8:1–4), as well as one of the related markings of the biblical text [Figs. 1–3]. The woodcuts employed here derive from series of Bible illustrations by Johann Bocksberger the younger and Jost Amman (for the Old Testament) and Virgil Solis (for the New Testament) which had previously been issued by Feyerabend's publishing house. Virgil Solis's comprehensive series of images for the New Testament, for instance, had been created especially for a pictorial Bible published by Feyerabend in 1562 under the title “*Biblische Figuren des Neuwen Testaments*” (Biblical Figures of the New Testament).⁷ The similar format of both the inserted illustrations and those which formed part of the original printed book results in a coherent and harmonious overall appearance which is further heightened by the exceptional coloration. The author of the inserted commentary program remains unknown but there is substantial evidence for him to have been a theologian of orthodox Lutheran observance.⁸

⁷ Title in full: *Biblische Figuren deß Neuen Testaments gantz künstlich gerissen / Durch den weiterümpften Vergilium Solis / Maler und Kupferstecher zu Nürnberg* (Frankfurt a.M., Sigmund Feyerabend: 1562). The Old Testament illustrations by Jost Amman/Johann Bocksberger were probably taken from: *Neuwe Biblische Figuren deß Alten und Neuwen Testaments / geordnet [...] durch [...] Johann Bockspersger [...] vnd nachgerissen [...] durch [...] Joß Amman* (Frankfurt a.M., Sigmund Feyerabend: 1565); however, differing from Virgil Solis's figural illustrations, the former were also used for the illustrations of printed full-length Bibles published by Feyerabend.

⁸ This is demonstrated by the analysis of the program, which conforms to central tenets of Lutheranism, such as the doctrine of justification or the doctrine of the estates – the *oeconomia christiana*. For a full discussion, see Deiters M., *Die Familie in der Bibel*. A preacher of the Nuremberg parish church of St. Sebaldus is recorded to have been the author of the preface to a genealogical book made for the Tucher patrician family. This preface follows similar theological and catechetical principles; see Kuhn C., *Generation als Grundbegriff einer historischen Geschichtskultur. Die Nürnberger Tucher im langen 16.*



Fig. 1. Virgil Solis, *Parable of the Fruits on the Tree and Miracle of the Cleansing of the Leper* (1562). Woodcuts, illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 247. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © Maria Deiters.

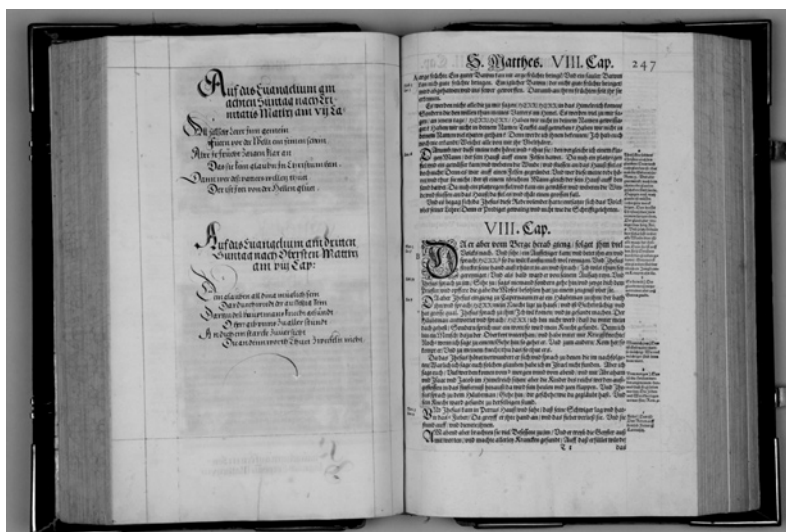


Fig. 2. Anonymous author, commentaries on the Parable of the Fruits on the Tree and the Miracle of the Cleansing of the Leper, Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 247. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © Maria Deiters.

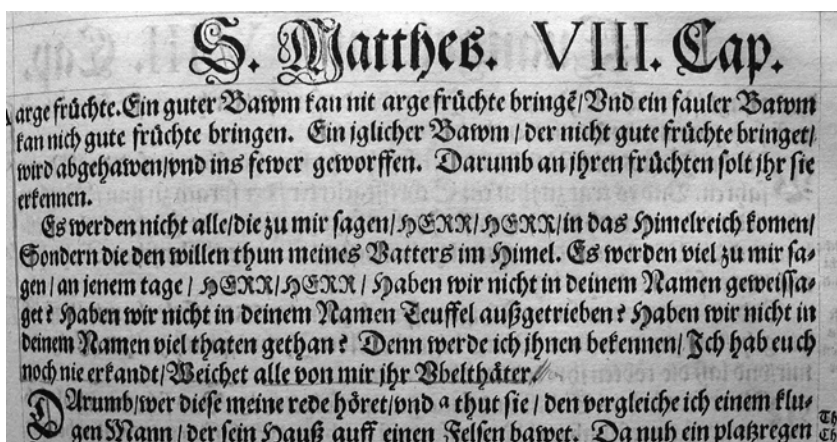


Fig. 3. Marking in the biblical text of the Parable of the Fruits on the Tree, Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, fol. 247r. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © Maria Deiters.

Relatively few images were inserted into the Old Testament, yet those in question mark focal points in terms of contents. Apart from a series of images of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, the program highlights exemplary tales on divine grace and punishment, for instance, David and Bathsheba [Fig. 4]. David's sin is subsequently punished by war and violence. These latter phenomena are depicted in the second inserted image which is allocated to the scene of Bathsheba in her bath and recurs several times in the Pfinzing Bible in an identical or similar manner, denoting again and again war and annihilation as divine retribution. The commentary texts elucidate each biblical tale further, simultaneously summarizing and interpreting it – for instance by referring to contemporary wars and identifying these likewise as God's retribution for the sins of mankind.

Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament was extended by an exceptionally dense program of illustrations and comments. An additional leaf with two images and texts was bound in between every second page. Their distribution follows the pericopes of the Sundays and feast days of the liturgical year. Besides a short Passion cycle, the emphasis was placed upon Christ's public ministry, his miracles and parables. The commentaries on the Gospel illustrations impart fundamental tenets of faith such

Jahrhundert, Formen der Erinnerung 45 (Göttingen: 2010) 268f. Yet it is also possible that Pfinzing himself compiled the commentaries in his Bible from other sources, such as edificatory books. Thus far, however, it has not been possible to identify a source.



Fig. 4. Jost Amman and Johann Bocksberger the Younger, *David and Bathsheba* and *Conquest of Jerusalem* (1564). Woodcuts, illuminated and glued into the Pfingzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. I, preceding fol. 272. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum für Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas e.V. an der Universität Leipzig (GWZO), photograph: Markus Hilbich.



Fig. 5. Virgil Solis, *The Canaanite Woman* (1562). Woodcut, illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 252. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

as the doctrine of justification and salvation through Christ's sacrifice. In addition, the comments also reveal an ethical and didactic purpose, which is, for example, tied to the parables. In several cases, protagonists from the Gospels appear as exemplars of true faith, for instance, the Canaanite Woman beseeching Christ to heal her daughter who was possessed by demons [Fig. 5]. The commentary explicitly introduces her as 'exemplar': 'Daß gebet all himel durchdringt [...] Wie vnnß zeigt das exempel an/ Von dem weiblein aus Canaan'.⁹ The explanatory comments are frequently introduced by the explicit demand to 'comprehend' the truths of faith and salvation through the illustrated tale. An example is provided by the Queen of Sheba who is presented in two framed images as witness of faith who truly hears and 'comprehends' God's teaching: 'Durch

⁹ Pfinzing-Bibel II, fol. 252.

sie versteh der Christen fleiß/ In Gottes wort wie Christus heißt' [Fig. 6].¹⁰ Didactic elements are interwoven with invocations and prayers.

Thus, the image-text-sequences inserted into the New and Old Testament of the Pfinzing Bible structure the biblical narrative and process it to serve the purposes of didactics and the instruction of faith. The organization of the additions to the Bible text according to the pericopes and the tripartite structure of biblical quotation, image, and textual commentary reveals an immediate proximity to other genres of literature providing access to the Bible, such as postils and Bible summaries, which I have briefly mentioned above.

A particularly close relative of the biblical part of the Pfinzing Bible is a very influential work by the Nuremberg theologian Veit Dietrich, the *Summaria christlicher Lehr*. Veit Dietrich was a confidant of Luther and, from 1535 onwards, a highly esteemed preacher and second-generation church reformer in Nuremberg.¹¹ In his activity he placed particular emphasis on writing books for the catechesis of the laity. Among his most important works were the edition of Luther's *Hauspostille* and two summaries of the Bible that were of lasting importance to Protestant didactic and devotional literature well into the nineteenth century. These comprise the *Summaria über die ganze Bibel*,¹² which summarizes the Bible chapter by chapter, and the *Summaria christlicher Lehr* – shown here – first published by Johann Berg in Nuremberg in 1546.¹³ The first edition was already illustrated lavishly. Reproduced here is one of the further editions, published by the same house in 1555 and identical with the first [Figs. 7, 8]. The work is organised according to the liturgical year and each of its entities contains an abbreviated quotation of the relevant biblical passage, an exegetical commentary and finally a prayer.

Worth attention in this context are those passages in Dietrich's fore- and afterwords that concern the usage of his *Summaria christlicher Lehr*: Within

¹⁰ Pfinzing-Bibel I, preceding fol. 195.

¹¹ For Dietrich's biography, writings, and theology see Klaus B., *Veit Dietrich. Leben und Werk* (Nuremberg: 1958).

¹² Dietrich Veit, *Summaria über die gantze Bibel, das Alte und Neue Testament: Darinn auffß kürtzte angezeigt wirdt, was am nötigsten und nützten ist, dem jungen volck und gemeinen Mann [...] Darnach sie ir leben richten, und [...] zu irer seelen seligkeyt brauchen können* (Nuremberg, Johann vom Berg – Ulrich Neuber: 1541). For the *Summaria über die ganze Bibel* and its significance, see most recently Kolb R., "The Summaria of Veit Dietrich as an Aid for teaching the Faith", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 99 (2008) 97–119.

¹³ Dietrich Veit, *Summaria Christlicher Lehr f[ue]r das junge volck. Was auß eim yeden So[nn]tags Euangelio zu mercken sey* (Nuremberg, Johann vom Berg – Ulrich Neuber: 1546).



Fig. 6. Jost Amman and Hans Bocksberger, *The Queen of Sheba* (1564). Woodcuts, illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. I, preceding fol. 195. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

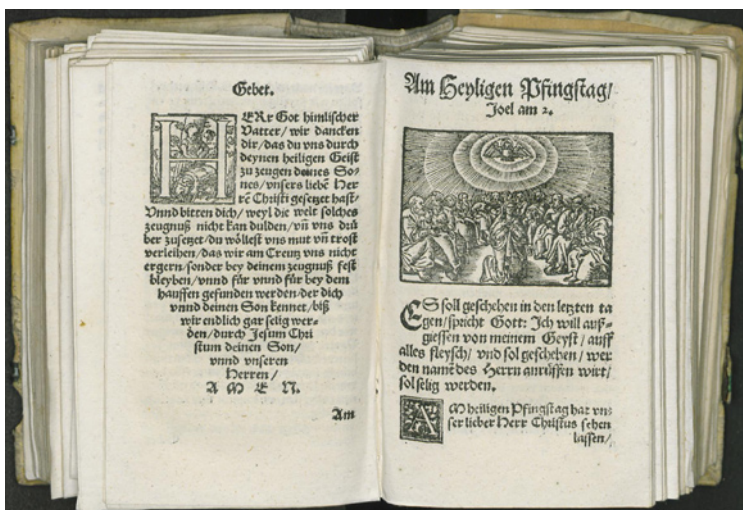


Fig. 7. Veit Dietrich, *Summaria christlicher Lehr* (Nuremberg, Johann vom Berg und Ulrich Neuber: 1555), beginning of the sequence on the first pericope to Pentecost with a woodcut by an unknown artist. Image © Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München.

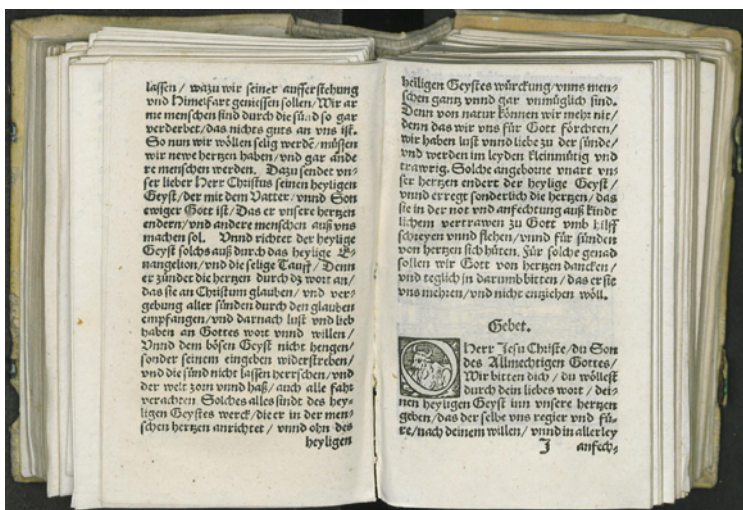


Fig. 8. Veit Dietrich, *Summaria christlicher Lehr* (Nuremberg, Johann vom Berg und Ulrich Neuber: 1555), following pages of the first sequence to Pentecost with exegetical commentary and prayer. Image © Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München.

the setting of a domestic service on Sundays, the head of the family is to recite the relevant passage from the Bible, read out the exegesis, and pray together with the family. Yet the biblical verse is to be read and recited again and again by the family as 'weekly reading' ('Wochenspruch').¹⁴ This instruction demonstrates how the *Summaria* were intended to fulfil the aim of internalizing the biblical message in several ways: as an integral part of domestic catechesis and devotion, on the one hand, and within the context of individually practised piety, on the other. Traces of usage testify to the fact that individuals did engage particularly with the images: a copy in the Wolfenbüttel library shows images probably colored by children.¹⁵

The similarities in the structure of both the *Summaria* and the Pfinzing Bible suggest that the latter was intended to serve analogous devotional practices. It is similarly based on the sequence of selected biblical passage, image, and commentary, and thus provides guidance towards a complex and intensifying reading and understanding of Scripture. Within this process, each pictorial and textual element counts in its own right. For instance, the design of the *Summaria* – clearly conceived with memorability in mind – directs the viewer's gaze by means of a clear page layout and a hierarchy in terms of size. Within this system, images occupy an important position. The contents center upon the biblical quotation, which is emphasized accordingly by the typography. Image and commentary explain the quotation each in its own way. The image visualizes the events of Pentecost, whereas the text calls for inner betterment, assisted by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. There are manifold cross-references between image, text and biblical quotation which I cannot set out further in this paper. Yet I would like to emphasize that the design of the *Summaria* and the Pfinzing Bible does not so much suggest a linear progress of reading; it rather challenges the viewer to engage in a permanent process of switching back and forth between visual and intellectual perception and to arrive at a complex and integrated comprehension. On the one hand, this structure recalls mnemonic practices such as informing, for instance, early modern textbooks.¹⁶ On the other, it also conforms to Luther's instructions on the meditation of the Bible in which he demands that individual biblical passages be read again and again, that their mean-

¹⁴ Dietrich, *Summaria christlicher Lehr*, afterword 'Dem christlichen Leser'.

¹⁵ 1548 edition, publishers: Johann vom Berg und Ulrich Neuber, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, H: C 566.8°.

¹⁶ On this, see Warncke, C., *Sprechende Bilder – sichtbare Worte. Das Bildverständnis in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 33 (Wiesbaden 1987) 217–221.

ing be meditated and applied to one's own being.¹⁷ He is frequently using a ruminative vocabulary here: one has to chew these passages, to taste them, to grope them in order to understand 'was der heilige geist damit meinert'.¹⁸ Thus, exegetical approaches to the Bible become interconnected with meditative practices.

In both works, the images form part of a process of devotional instruction and internalisation of doctrinal truths and biblical tenets. In the next section of my paper I shall be examining the specific importance played by images within this process and the nature of their relationship to the biblical word.

Recent scholarship has shown Luther's high esteem of images and the visual in general precisely because of their internalizing role – in sharp contrast to Calvin or Zwingli, for example.¹⁹ This is tied to attributing to images the special capability 'to move the heart' on account of their aesthetic qualities and internalizing power. Hence, in his preface to the *Passional*, Luther justified the inclusion of images by stating that readers 'are better prompted through image and parable to memorize the divine tale'.²⁰ Luther describes this close nexus between external and internal images – the 'images within the heart' – in other texts, too:

Wenn ich Christum hore, so entwirfft sich ynn meym hertzen eyne mans bilde, das am creutze henget [...] Issts nu nicht sunde sondern gut, das ich Christum bilde ym hertzen habe, warumb sollte sunde seyn wenn ich's ynn

¹⁷ Nicol M., *Meditation bei Luther*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 34 (Göttingen: 1984) 62f., 81–101.

¹⁸ Luther M., "Vorrede zum 1. Bande der Wittenberger Ausgabe der deutschen Schriften (1539)", in *Werke. Kritische Ausgabe. Vol. L* (WA 50) (Weimar: 1914) 659: 'meditirn das ist [...] die buchstabische wort im Buch immer treiben und reiben, lesen und widerlesen, mit vleissigem [...] nachdencken, was der heilige geist damit meinert'. The significance of the tradition of mystic *ruminatio* for Luther is discussed by Nicol, *Meditation* esp. 55–61.

¹⁹ For fundamental discussions, see Hamm B. "Luthers Anleitung zum seligen Sterben vor dem Hintergrund der spätmittelalterlichen *Ars moriendi*", in Ebner M. et al. (eds.), *Leben trotz Tod*, Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie 19 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: 2004) 311–362, here esp. 338–346; Steiger J.A., *Fünf Zentralthemen der Theologie Luthers und seiner Erben. Communicatio – Imago – Figura – Maria – Exempla*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 104 (Leiden – Boston – Cologne: 2002) 118–126; Berns J.J., "Umrüstung der Mnemotechnik im Kontext der Reformation und Gutenbergs Erfindung", in Berns J.J. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Ars memorativa. Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Gedächtniskunst 1400–1750*, Frühe Neuzeit 15 (Tübingen: 1993) 35–100 (where also the comparison with Calvin and Zwingli is drawn).

²⁰ '[...] durch Bildnis und gleichnis besser bewegt werden, die göttliche geschicht zu behalten', WA 10, II, 458.

augen habe? Syntemal das hertze mehr gillt [...] als da ist der rechte sitz und wonunge Gottes.²¹

Such thoughts can be found in even more exaggerated terms in the writings of Lutheran theologians of the second half of the sixteenth century. For instance, in a treatise confronting Calvinist hostility towards images, the professor of theology Simon Gedicke emphasizes the special quality of images to effect a 'moving of the heart' ('Bewegung des Herzens') and thereby actually facilitate a sense of 'good devotion' ('gute Andacht') in the first place.²² Prefaces to numerous pictorial Bibles also take up this line of thinking in order to stress the benefit of the biblical image. In one of Sigmund Feyerabend's first editions of a pictorial Bible – issued in 1564 – the publisher attributes to images the quality not only to please the eye but also to stimulate the heart: 'hertzen an[zu]reitze[n]'.²³

As set out earlier in my paper, one of the Pfinzing Bible's guiding principles in selecting images for the Old Testament and commentaries on the New Testament was the presentation of biblical figures and tales as 'exemplars'. Here I am reminding you once again of the image and commentary on the miracle of the exorcism of the Canaanite woman's daughter. Luther valued the genre of biblical exemplars for their highly visualizing effect, for they place the stories in front of the beholder, 'als were man dabey'.²⁴ Yet, in looking closely at the pictorial program of the Pfinzing Bible, it is conspicuous that numerous images are not solely concerned with presenting models for ethical behaviour and true faith but in addition provide an instruction for the appropriate reception of the biblical texts and their messages. As mentioned above, in the Old Testament, for instance, image and accompanying commentary introduce the Queen of

²¹ Luther M. "Wider die himmlischen Propheten, von den Bildern und Sakrament", in *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Abteilung 1. Schriften*, 73 vols. (Weimar: 1883–) XVIII (WA 18) 37–124, quotation 67.

²² Gedicke, Simon "Von Bildern und Altären in den Evang. Kirchen Augsp. Confession wolgegründter Bericht. Sampt kurtzer Wiederlegung des newlich außgegangenen Zerbestischen Buchs" (Magdeburg: 1597), H, fol. iv. – It has been proven that Gedicke and his contemporaries thus continue a specifically Lutheran tradition: see Havsteen S.R., "Lutheran Theology and Artistic Media: Responses to the Theological Discourse on the Visual Arts", in Spicer, A. (ed.), *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham – Burlington, VT 2012) 221–240, esp. 236–240.

²³ Feyerabend, Sigmund, dedicatory letter to Melchior Lorch, in *Neuwe Biblische Figuren deß Alten und Neuen Testaments* (Frankfurt a. M., Georg Rabe – Sigmund Feyerabend – Weygand Hanen Erben: 1564), quoted after Reinitzer, *Biblia deutsch*, 244f.

²⁴ Luther M., "Vorrede zu Historia Galeatii Capellae. 1538", *D. Martin Luthers Werke L* (WA 50) 383, 1–12. The quotation refers to linguistic images, yet it can easily be applied to visual exemplars.

Sheba as a recipient of Solomon's teachings who not only listens to the wisdom of the king but already recognizes the future salvation through Christ. This aspect becomes even more obvious when turning towards the illustrations of the New Testament.

The Bible illustrations by Virgil Solis have thus far attracted little scholarly attention.²⁵ Because of their richness of detail and decorative effect, they have been dismissed as lacking any original exegetical value.²⁶ This assessment appears to be partly due to the afterlife of the critique advanced by Christoph Walther, proofreader of the Lufft publishing house at Wittenberg. Walther strongly condemned the competing Feyerabend enterprise in Frankfurt as running counter to Luther's own demand for a precise reproduction of the text.²⁷ Yet Virgil Solis's illustrations were highly successful among contemporaries and well into the seventeenth century. They were widely received and reprinted and merit a detailed investigation. This is especially true of the extensive cycle illustrating the New Testament, as Solis could rely on comparatively few models and pictorial topoi when devising it; therefore, this cycle is of particular conceptual interest.

One of Walther's charges against Solis was that his figures were unrecognizable with regard to the text: 'was den Text belangt fast unkenntlich'.²⁸ Upon closer inspection of Solis's illustration cycle as employed in the Pfingzing Bible, there are indeed conspicuous differences in terms of pictorial narrative and the immediate identifiability of the images. The Old Testament images are mostly characterized by richness of narrative detail. Frequently they draw together several episodes from the relevant biblical tale. Very characteristic for this type is the picture from the story of Joseph showing Pharaoh's dream [Fig. 9]. Provided the viewer has some basic biblical knowledge, the image is immediately recognizable. Likewise, the New Testament cycle also contains numerous readily identifiable scenes, for instance from Christ's infancy or the Passion, which frequently follow well-established pictorial formulae. To a considerable extent, however, the impact of the pictorial cycle is shaped by images depicting Christ speaking

²⁵ For Solis's Bible illustrations, see Schmidt, *Illustration der Lutherbibel* 236–244; Ubisch E. von, *Virgil Solis und seine biblischen Illustrationen für den Holzschnitt* (Leipzig: 1889); Harjes I., *Figurenbände der Renaissance. Entwicklung und Rezeption einer Buchgattung (1533–1600)* (Weimar: 2008) 148–158.

²⁶ Schmidt, *Illustration der Lutherbibel* 239.

²⁷ For Walther's critique, see *ibidem* 25f.

²⁸ Quoted in *ibidem* 25.



Fig. 9. Virgil Solis, *Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream* (1560). Woodcut illustration from Martin Luther, *Biblia deutsch* (Frankfurt am Main, Sigmund Feyerabend: 1561), illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. I, fol. 31v. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

or, respectively, preaching in front of an audience. In these scenes, Christ usually forms the compositional centre as one of the large figures standing in the foreground. But he hardly ever faces the viewer. Instead, he addresses the audience within the picture, frequently in such a way as to be shown in profile – sometimes even as a rear-view figure with raised arms, either as a pointing gesture or to emphasize speech. Frequently the depiction is so schematic, and the background landscapes and architectural settings are so generic, as to make their identification with a particular biblical event quite difficult without inscriptional support. Yet it becomes evident that an unequivocal identification of these images did not necessarily tally with the viewers' expectations, for one image found double use. First, this image is linked with Chapter 22 of the *Gospel of Matthew* in which Christ expresses the commandment of love which is crucial to Lutheran theology (*Matthew* 22:36–38): 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God'. Second, the image is allocated to a central passage of the Sermon on the Mount in which Christ preaches on the commandment,

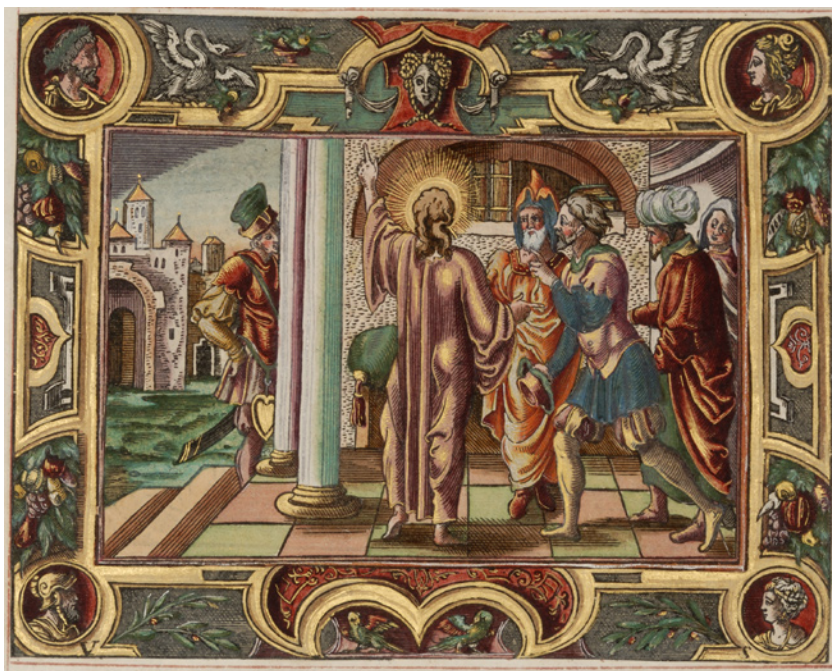


Fig. 10. Virgil Solis, woodcut illustration of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:21–23): “Christ preaches on the first commandment” (1562), illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 246. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

‘Thou shalt not kill’ (*Matthew* 5:21–23) [Fig. 10]. The second use of this image is astonishing, since the urban scenery does not fit the setting of the Sermon on the Mount at all. Apparently, it was considered more important to provide a visual reference to the divine commandments. In this regard, the prominent posture of Christ – evoking an exclamation mark – visualizes the articulation of a divine commandment whose recipients are the approaching people.

But there is also a pictorial focus on the preaching Christ in those images which recount biblical tales and parables in a clearly identifiable way. I am showing here the illustration of the sixth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel which I am also advancing as an example for the manner in which Virgil Solis was in fact capable of directing the gaze and insight of the viewer in spite of his apparently so decorative pictorial compositions [Fig. 11]. The image represents Christ’s admonishment according to *Matthew* 6:19–21:



Fig. 11. Virgil Solis, woodcut illustration of Matthew 6:19–21: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth [...]” (1562), illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 246. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth [...] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven’.²⁹ The latter is depicted in a separate building typical for Virgil Solis’s pictorial compositions; there, a figure sits amidst hoarded treasures. Christ and the group of Apostles, however, occupy center stage in the foreground. The connection between the parable narrative – spatially removed as it is to a different layer of reality – and the speaking figure of Christ is provided by Peter who simultaneously looks backwards, turns his body towards Christ and places his hand upon his heart in token of understanding. The other woodcuts allocated to the Sermon on the Mount also depict Christ as teacher, such as the parable of the fruits of the tree [Fig. 1]. Similar to the parable of the treasures in heaven discussed above, this scene is also identifiable, yet the pictorial composi-

²⁹ All biblical quotations are taken from the authorized King James Version.



Fig. 12. Virgil Solis, *The Singling-Out of Peter (Mt 16:18)* (1562). Woodcut, illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 252. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

tion with the large-size figures of Christ and his audience also accentuates the preaching – as well as the reception – of God's word. Images not allocated to the Sermon on the Mount – such as the singling out of St. Peter – confirm this analysis [Fig. 12].

The depictions of Christ as teacher and preacher show him as nucleus of the gospel and bearer of the truths of salvation. Luther stressed repeatedly that the core of the gospel was formed by Christ's *doctrine*, whilst his deeds were only of secondary importance.³⁰ This tenet was taken up by a German scholar of the Bible, Heimo Reinitzer, who suggested it was the reason for the fact that the printed editions of the New Testament instigated by Luther himself were largely eschewing illustrations. According to

³⁰ For example in his *Wilchs die rechten und edlichsten Bucher des Newen Testaments sind*; see Martin P., *Martin Luther und die Bilder zur Apokalypse. Die Ikonographie der Illustrationen zur Offenbarung des Johannes in der Lutherbibel 1522 bis 1546*, Vestigia Biblicae 5 (Hamburg: 1983) 97f.

him, it would have been more difficult to visualise doctrine than deeds.³¹ Yet Virgil Solis's sermon images demonstrate that the artist had no problems in visualizing Christ's teaching.

But it is possible to advance even further in terms of interpretation. Luther saw one of the principal differences between the Old and the New Testament in the contrast between the Law, defined as 'written on tablets and [thus] dead Scripture', and the living voice of the Gospel. Accordingly, Christ had not written down anything, but delivered everything orally, with the Apostles primarily as listeners.³² As Albrecht Beutel has shown, this 'orality' was a central category for Luther's understanding of the Gospel: 'It is only in oral guise that the Gospel in the strict sense succeeds in raising its voice as the word of God'.³³ However, for various reasons – not least in order to ensure the survival of evangelical doctrine – the 'literality of Scripture' ('Schriftlichkeit der Schrift') would have been a necessity and Luther therefore places the reading of the Bible on equal rank to listening to the preaching of God's word.³⁴

Taking on board these theological reflections, the above-mentioned images that illustrate Christ's preaching and teaching do interact with the biblical text in a particular way. In visualising oral activity – Christ's preaching as well as the listening of the Apostles – they point the viewer towards the divine word expressed by Christ as the true substance of Holy Scripture. Thereby they aim beyond the confines of the text, making use of visual means in order to point to something that cannot in fact be visualised.³⁵

³¹ Reinitzer, *Biblia deutsch* 132. This argument is supported by Martin, *Bilder zur Apokalypse* 97f. In contrast to Martin, however, Reinitzer does not exclude the possibility – repeatedly assumed in previous scholarship – that the illustration scheme of the Cologne Bible served as model for Luther. This scheme also forwent gospel illustrations. The state of research is summarized in *ibidem* 93–114.

³² Luther M., "Schrift über das Evangelium Dominicae IIII., Adventus, Johannis I.", in *D. Martin Luthers Werke* VII (WA 7) 526: 'Lex in tabulis scribebatur et erat scriptura mortua, limitibus tabulae clausa, ideo parum efficax. At Euangelium vivae et liberrimae voci in auras effusae committitur, ideo plus energiae habet ad convertendum. Unde Christus ipse nihil scripsit, sed omnia vocaliter dixit. Apostoli parum scripserunt, plurimum autem locuti sunt'.

³³ For the issue of the literality of Scripture, see Beutel, "Erfahrene Bibel" 309–313, quotation p. 310: 'Die Kategorie der Mündlichkeit ist [...] für Luthers Verständnis des Evangeliums [...] konstitutiv. Nur in mündlicher Gestalt vermag das Evangelium im strengen Sinn als das Wort Gottes laut zu werden'.

³⁴ *Ibidem* 312.

³⁵ For an observation of similarly paradoxical phenomena – which, however, were constitutive for the functions of religious writings in the Middle Ages – see Largier N., "Der

This applies even if a more cautious point of view were taken with regard to attributing such systematic theological concepts to Solis's pictorial inventions. The popularity of the notion of the divine word as substance of Scripture is evinced by a note of the embroiderer Hans Plock that he wrote in the margin of his own copy of Luther's Bible, in which he equates God's voice with the 'Bible's voice': 'Luther saget Gottes schdime und der bibel schdime sei eine schdime'.³⁶

At the same time, the viewer is confronted with depictions of listeners – whether the Queen of Sheba or the Apostles – as exemplars of the true listening to, and the true comprehension and internalization of, the preached and read word of the Bible. This interpretation is underlined by the way in which the *Biblischen figuren zum Newen Testament* by Virgil Solis have been employed and staged in the Pfinzing Bible. This applies especially to their coloration.

The coloration of prints has not attracted scholarly attention and appreciation until very recently.³⁷ The way in which this artistic means has been applied in the Pfinzing Bible – which is of exceptional artistic quality – provides an example as to how it not only enhanced the visual effect of the work and turned it into a singular object, but also was a bearer of meaning and thus capable of contributing essentially to its contents.³⁸ The coloration of the Bible illustrations in the Pfinzing Bible was probably made in the circle of the distinguished Nuremberg book illuminator Georg Mack the Elder.³⁹ In fact, Mack signed the illuminations in the genealogical parts of the work (together with Jost Amman as draughtsman). The illuminations of the biblical part of the book are not

Körper der Schrift. Bild und Text am Beispiel einer Seuse-Handschrift des 15. Jahrhunderts", in Müller, J. – Wenzel, H. (eds.), *Mittelalter. Neue Wege durch einen alten Kontinent* (Stuttgart – Leipzig: 1999) 241–271, here 241–243.

³⁶ Plock Bible I, fol. iv; see Deiters, "Bible, Image, Artist" 162.

³⁷ See Gmelin H.G., "Illuminierte Druckgraphik um 1600. Ein Phänomen der Dürerrenaissance", *Städte-Jahrbuch* 9 (1983) 183–204; Augustyn W., "Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Buchdruck und Handschrift. Versuch einer Skizze aus kunsthistorischer Sicht", in Dicke G. – Grubmüller K. (eds.) *Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschrift und Buchdruck*, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 16 (Wiesbaden: 2003) 5–47; and especially the revelatory exhibition catalogue by Dackerman S., *Painted Prints. The Revelation of Color in Northern Renaissance & Baroque Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts* [exh. cat., Baltimore Museum of Art] (Baltimore: 2002).

³⁸ See also the analysis of colored medieval woodcuts by Areford D., "The Image in the Viewer's Hands. The Reception of Early Prints in Europe.", *Studies in Iconography* 24 (2003) 5–42.

³⁹ For Georg Mack the Elder, his father Hans Mack, and his son Georg Mack the Younger, see Dackermann, *Painted Prints* esp. 19–24.

signed. Yet the exceptional quality of the coloration is extremely close to Mack's known works: it is distinguished by subtle washes – which do not cover the underdrawings – and highly precise and refined gold and silver heightenings.⁴⁰ Mack's skill in emphasizing theological contents by means of illumination has recently been demonstrated in great detail by Walter Melion in his discussion of another work of the artist.⁴¹

The illumination of the Pfinzing Bible is characterised by the rich use of gold heightening. This is certainly motivated by conspicuous display. At the same time, however, the color gold is distinguished by its special meaning in terms of the iconography of material. In the medieval tradition, gold served as honorific adornment, stressing the holiness of the Bible. But it was not only an indicator of high rank. Theologians such as Rhabanus Maurus saw the splendour of gold as reflecting divine light, even revealing God himself.⁴²

The ongoing relevance of the medieval idea of gold as *color coelestis* is demonstrated exemplarily within the Pfinzing Bible by the representation of the prophet Joel [Fig. 13].⁴³ Joel occupies a distinguished position in the Lutheran exegesis of the Bible. He foretold the events of Pentecost and announced the descent of the Holy Spirit. This is depicted in the background of the image. The dove of the Holy Spirit is encircled by golden rays which also illuminate the prophet. He in turn appears to deflect the radiance towards the listeners. Joel was appreciated by Luther as prototype of the Christian preacher, as he delivered the first sermon of the Christian church and 'weissagt vom reich Christi und dem heiligen Geist'.⁴⁴

The golden radiance thus visualises the Holy Spirit. Joel is being 'illuminated' by it and imparts its working upon his audience – in Luther's

⁴⁰ According to an oral tradition handed down among the Pfinzings and their heirs, Martin Pfinzing himself was the illuminator of the Bible. Surviving sketches testify to Martin Pfinzing's artistic talent and interests, and a few of the Bible illustrations actually show his initials, added in gold paint. However, in view of the scope of the project and the exceptional quality of the images, his authorship is highly unlikely.

⁴¹ Melion W.S., "Nor my praise to graven image": Divine Artifice and the Heart's Idols in Georg Mack the Elder's Painted Print of the Trinity", in Cole M. – Zorach R.E. (eds.), *The Idol in the Age of Art. Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2009) 215–237.

⁴² See Reudenbach B., "Gold ist Schlamm". Anmerkungen zur Materialbewertung im Mittelalter", in Wagner M. – Rübel D. (eds.), *Material in Kunst und Alltag*, Hamburger Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte. Studien, Quellen, Theorien 1 (Berlin: 2002) 1–12, here 6.

⁴³ This image can be found on a leaf with illustrations by Bocksberger/Amman, bound into the first volume of the Pfinzing Bible, preceding fol. 209.

⁴⁴ Volz H. (ed.), *Biblia: das ist: Die gantze Heilige Schrift: Deudsch*, trans. M. Luther, 3 vols. (Graz: 2004) II 1588f.



Fig. 13. Jost Amman and Hans Bocksberger, *The Prophet Joel Preaching* (1564). Woodcut, illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. I, preceding fol. 209. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

words, he preaches the ‘mirabilia’ of God.⁴⁵ At the same time, however, the splendor descending upon the preaching prophet and radiating from him onto his listeners probably also depicts the divine word. In his lectures on Pentecost, Luther stresses repeatedly: ‘The spirit does not enter the heart unless it should previously have entered into the word, such as Christ entered into the bosom of the Virgin once’.⁴⁶ In the Joel image, the sermon – which, according to Luther, equals the word of God – is represented already by the speech gesture of the prophet. Yet the impact of

⁴⁵ Luther Martin, “Predigt am Pfingstmontag [1531]”, in *D. Martin Luthers Werke XXXIV.1* (WA 34.1) 484, 3f. On the church reformers’ notion of ‘illumination’ and its nexus with the word, see Wagner F., “Erleuchtung”, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin – New York 1982) X 165–174, here esp. 167.

⁴⁶ ‘Der Geist kommt nicht ins Herz, es sei denn er sei zuvor ins Wort eingegangen, wie Christus einst in den Schoß der Jungfrau’, quoted from Beutel, “Erfahrene Bibel” 406. For Luther’s equation of the Holy Spirit and light, see Böcher O., “Licht und Feuer”, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin – New York: 1991) XXI 83–119, here esp. 111, 117.

the visualization is enhanced decisively by the radiance of the gold which confers divine light upon the image.

The intellectual sequence gold – light – word was probably formed fairly rapidly in the minds of contemporary viewers. Protestant church hymns are also interwoven by a rich metaphoric of light.⁴⁷ The equation of light and divine word has its biblical foundation in the beginning of the Gospel of John, for instance, where word and light are identified with one another in the act of creation. The interpretation of 'light' with reference to Christ is already contained in the text of John's Gospel and is commented upon in Luther's gloss in the margins of his Bible translation: 'Christus ist das Licht der welt / derselbige erleuchtet durchs Euangelium alle Menschen'.⁴⁸ In the Gospel text Christ himself speaks: 'I am the light of the world / he that followeth me [...] shall have the light of life' (*John* 8:12).

These core tenets of theology appear to have been taken up in the coloration of the Gospel illustrations of the Pfinzing Bible: Christ is not merely distinguished by a halo but also by gold heightenings on his draperies which are applied so densely as to lend radiance to his entire figure. This is especially relevant in the sermon scenes where the golden light of Christ also radiates upon his listeners, thus 'quasi-illuminating' them, as shown particularly clearly on the image discussed previously, which visualises the Sermon on the Mount and thereby Christ's announcement of God's commandments.

Here, it is incumbent upon me once more to point towards the connection with Luther's ideas on the exegesis and appropriation of the Bible by the faithful. Luther emphasized that Christ's doctrines in the Gospels cannot be comprehended by the intellect alone but that they need to be absorbed by the heart as the organ of faith.⁴⁹ However, the true understanding of the Gospel is directly inscribed into the heart of the faithful by the Holy Spirit. This is one of the theological foundations for the doctrine of the self-exegesis of Scripture which I mentioned at the beginning of my paper. This process is likewise described as 'illumination' in Luther's

⁴⁷ Böcher, "Licht und Feuer", 111, 117. For a metaphoric of light, see also Pumplun C.M., *Begriff des Unbegreiflichen. Funktion und Bedeutung der Metaphorik in den Geburtsbetrachtungen der Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg (1633–1694)*, *Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache und Literatur* 120 (Amsterdam – Atlanta: 1995).

⁴⁸ Volz (ed.), *Biblia* II 2137.

⁴⁹ The heart as organ of understanding and seat of faith was a central metaphor for Luther; see Stolt B., *Martin Luthers Rhetorik des Herzens* (Tübingen: 2000).



Fig. 14. Virgil Solis, *Pentecost* (1562). Woodcut, illuminated by Georg Mack the Elder (?). Glued into the Pfinzing Bible (1565–1570), vol. II, preceding fol. 312. Nürnberg-Großgründlach, Hallerarchiv. Image © GWZO, photograph: Markus Hilbich.

popular texts such as the Catechisms.⁵⁰ Veit Dietrich's exegesis of the Pentecost pericope – which I discussed earlier on – urges the faithful to open their hearts and allow themselves to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

For contemporaries, this condition was both desirable and difficult to attain. Thus, numerous prayers contained in the *Summaria christlicher Lehr* beg for the attainment of illumination and thus faith. Similar thoughts can be found in Pfinzing Bible's commentary on the Pentecost image which specifically names the Apostles as models for the 'verstehen' of 'sprach und schrift' through illumination [Fig. 14].⁵¹ Thus, the argument

⁵⁰ Luther M., "Großer Katechismus" in *D. Martin Luthers Werke XXX.1* (WA 30.1) 127: For him who reads the Bible daily 'und ubet mit gedanken', the Holy Spirit is present ('gegen wertig') and he obtains 'mehr liecht und andacht dazu'. For the term 'illumination' as being at the core of Lutheran orthodoxy, see also Wagner, "Erleuchtung".

⁵¹ Pfinzing Bible II, inserted sheet preceding fol 312.

advanced in this article with regard to the images' function to move the inner self comes full circle.⁵²

Luther strictly tied the 'illumination' of the faithful to the word of God, whether it was listened to or read.⁵³ The sermon images analysed in this paper represent God's word as substance of the biblical text and visualize it in a way that can be grasped sensuously. In the case of the illuminated woodcuts of the Pfinzing Bible, it is the gold in its radiance that points towards this substance of Holy Scripture that is hidden beyond the printed word and the image.⁵⁴ At the same time, the images and their protagonists become *exempla* of the illumination through the Holy Spirit. They impart and evoke the condition to be attained by the audience in the course of reading and internalizing the biblical text.

To refer back to the title of this collection of papers: in the case of the Pfinzing Bible, it is the visual exegesis that determines to a large extent the complex process by which biblical messages were understood and internalized and by which salvation (imparted through these very messages) could be attained – not only through the intellect, but also by faith.

⁵² For similar concepts of 'illumination' in the Bible of Hans Plock including a crucial function of images within this process of understanding and internalization, see Deiters, "Bible, Image, Artist" 171–179.

⁵³ Wagner, "Erleuchtung" 167.

⁵⁴ For the corresponding teaching of Durandus of Mende with regard to the *ornamenta* of the church – which include Gospel books, see Faupel-Dreves K., *Vom rechten Gebrauch der Bilder im liturgischen Raum. Mittelalterliche Funktionsbestimmungen bildender Kunst im Rationale divinatorum officiorum des Durandus von Mende (1230/1–1296)*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 89 (Leiden – Boston – Cologne: 2000) 353.

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CLADES JUDAEAE GENTIS: PATTERNS OF DESTRUCTION

Merel Groentjes

The *Speculum humanae salvationis* beautifully illustrates a long and widely accepted tradition that holds that God's divine plan is reflected in and increasingly revealed through his Creation: in Nature, History and of course the Bible. This tradition is the basic assumption that underlies typology, which is an exegetical method that looks for patterns in salvation history as manifestations of the divine will and its purpose for mankind. In the *Speculum*, three Old Testament *types* are paired with the single New Testament *antitype* they prefigure. However, events considered to be historical but deriving from sources other than the Bible, such as the story of the *Golden Table* (Valerius Maximus), and *Emperor Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl* (Jacob de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*), as well as such stories from the Book of Nature as the "Ostrich Who Freed her Young" (Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*) were also considered to foreshadow episodes from the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.¹ Furthermore, the typological view of history extended beyond the time of Christ towards the end of times, the ultimate fulfillment of all things, when God's divine plan would finally come to fruition.²

Contrary to the view still prevalent among scholars that the application of typology in art significantly decreased after the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and the *Biblia pauperum* went out of print around 1530, many sixteenth-century artists were in fact inspired to re-examine typology's interpretative potential. For example, in the early 1530s a new kind of typological imagery known as the "Allegory of Law and Grace" emerged from the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder in Wittenberg.³ Individual

¹ Appuhn H., *Heilsspiegel, Die Bilder Des Mittelalterlichen Erbauungsbuches Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (Dortmund: 1981) 16, 23, 59.

² Falkenburg R., "Black Holes in Bosch: Visual Typology in the 'Garden of Earthly Delights'", Falkenburg R. – Melion W.S. – Richardson T. (eds.), *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: 2008) 124.

³ See: Clifton J., "A Lutheran Image on the Title-Page of the Last Bible without a Confessional Label", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain Journal of Theology and Canon Law* 84, 1 (2008) 69–86; and Ohly F., *Gesetz und Evangelium: Zur Typologie bei Luther und Lucas Cranach, zum Blutstrahl der Gnade in der Kunst* (Münster: 1985) 16–27.

pairings of type and antitype have given way to a composition in which the types are gathered into a summa of the Old Testament, while the New Testament antitypes summarize Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The image, which reads like the two-column page of a book, shows that the Law from the Old Testament results in death, while Christ's teachings lead to triumph over death. This imagery appeared on title pages of bibles of various denominations, instructing the reader how the Scriptures should be read and understood.

In the Netherlands, Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574) applied typology in a particularly creative way in the *magnum opus* of his graphic work: the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* print series.⁴ The prints were engraved and published by Philips Galle (1537–1612) in 1569.⁵ As his subject matter, Heemskerck has chosen to depict commonly illustrated Old Testament stories such as the *Tower of Babel* and *Lot and his Daughters*, as well as scenes rarely if ever depicted, such as the *Burial of Samson*, and the *People of Israel Divided between Tibni and Omri*. Furthermore, the series ends with two Nativity scenes from the New Testament, followed by the *Destruction of Jerusalem by Emperor Titus*, which does not occur in Scripture at all but derives ultimately from an eyewitness account of the Jewish revolt in the first century, recorded by Flavius Josephus (ca. 37–100 AD) in *De bello judaico*.

Despite increased scholarly interest in Heemskerck's prints in recent decades, the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* series has received very little attention in scholarship yet. Eleanor Saunders, who dedicated a chapter to the *Clades* series in her dissertation on Old Testament subjects in Heemskerck's oeuvre, is the only scholar to have investigated the series as a whole.⁶ Her approach is informed by the assumption that 'Heemskerck chose his subjects for the light they would shed on contemporary problems', but she concedes that 'how exactly to interpret them raises a more difficult issue'.⁷ Ultimately, she reads Samson's victory in *Samson Destroying the Temple of the Philistines* as a direct reference to Emperor Charles V's fight against the enemies of the Catholic faith; the army of Regent Margaret of Parma

⁴ The series is also called the *Inventiones Heemskerckianae ex utroque Testamento*, after an inscription added to the frontispiece by Ioannes Galle (1600–1676) when he reprinted the series in Antwerp.

⁵ Most of the drawings survive and are dated 1567 and 1568. See: Garff J., *Tegninger af Maerten van Heemskerck* (Kopenhagen: 1971), cat. 90–101, plates 90–101.

⁶ Saunders E., 'Als een claeere spiegele der tegenwoordige tijden': *Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten Van Heemskerck* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University: 1978) 224–276.

⁷ Ibidem 233.

is likened to the army of Nebuchadnezzar, and Titus stands for the Duke of Alba, who harshly reconquered most of the Netherlandish cities that had revolted against Spanish rule.⁸ However, not all prints of the series lend themselves equally well to such an interpretation; the Nativity scenes seem particularly out of place.

Rather, in the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* print series, Heemskerck innovatively used typology to argue for the exegetical authority of the visual arts. The twenty-two engravings, organized in pairs, represent the unfolding of salvation history through visual and narrative patterns, particularly by means of the (ruinous) architectural monuments that dominate every scene. These ruins function as a vehicle for the communication between God and his people and signal the increasing distance between God and the Israelites as the latter continue to disregard divine commands. Their failure to recognize Christ as the Messiah ultimately leads to the destruction of the Jewish Temple and the breaking of the Old Covenant. In the frontispiece of the series, Heemskerck introduces himself as an artistic authority on ancient architecture and, by extension, as an exegete authorized to present his tropological interpretation visually to his viewers.

Heemskerck's Catholic upbringing acquainted him with traditional typology embedded in the liturgy. While in Rome, a number of his sketches testify to his admiration of the Sistine chapel paintings, which contain a number of figurative analogies.⁹ Later, as a member of the 'Wijngaerdtranken' rhetoricians chamber in Haarlem, even if only or mostly responsible for the 'design and execution of devices, decors, costumes, attributes, and the like', as Ilja Veldman has suggested, he would have been involved in the organization of the moralistic and didactic plays the rhetoricians staged. These plays were presented on religious occasions and often contained typological pairings.¹⁰ These and other biographical circumstances suggest that Heemskerck must have been familiar with typological figuration,

⁸ Ibidem 274–75.

⁹ Hulsen C. – Egger H., *Die Römische Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerck im Königlichen Kupferstichkabinett zu Berlin* (Soest: 1975). On the typological organization of the Sistine chapel, see for instance: Wind E., *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo: The Sistine Ceiling* (Oxford: 2000).

¹⁰ Veldman I., *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century* (Maarssen: 1977) 130–32. On typology and the *rederijders*, see Dekeyser B., "Een gelaagde Bijbellectuur: Over het gebruik van typologie in de Rederijdersliteratuur," in *Koninklijke Soevereine Hoofdkamer Van Retorica 'De Fonteyne' te Gent, Jaarboek*, eds. D. Coigneau, – A. van Bruaene – W. Waterschoot (Oudenaarde: 2003–2004) 9–30.

an assumption that is supported by an examination of a number of his paintings and prints.

Shortly after his return from Italy in 1537, Heemskerck received a commission to paint a monumental polyptych for the main altar of the St. Laurence church in Alkmaar, now in the cathedral of Linköping, Sweden.¹¹ This was his first opportunity to display his new Italianizing style of painting and to attract new patrons. Consequently, in the words of Bengt Cnattingius: 'Apparently Heemskerck was prepared to create his "opus ultimum" with the St. Lawrence altar [...] that was the maximum of power and talent that he could muster. As to size, too, it was to be "non plus ultra"'.¹²

The altarpiece consists of ten panels, divided into two horizontal registers, the upper roughly twice the height of the lower. The outer wings depict the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* on the upper left, *St. Lawrence Distributing the Church Treasures* on the right, with the *Adoration of the Shepherds* below the former and the *Last Supper* below the latter. The interior consists of six separate scenes, from left to right: the *Ecce Homo*, *Crucifixion*, *Resurrection*, and below, the *Flagellation*, *Carrying of the Cross*, and the *Mocking of Christ*. Heemskerck placed his self-portrait, which looks out at the beholder, among the donor portraits in *St. Lawrence Distributing the Church Treasures*.

On the exterior wings, St. Lawrence is presented as a figure of Christ. In the scene of his martyrdom, the saint's body is tied to a gridiron, his torso twisted towards the beholder. His body is on display, just as the Christ child is on display in the scene below, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*. On the right, the saint distributing the church treasures analogizes to Christ's distributing the bread and the wine at the *Last Supper*. Heemskerck thereby follows in a long tradition in which saints are designated *typi christi*; as early as the year 107 AD, St. Ignatius of Antioch described his bishop as *τύπον* of the Father.¹³ A more well-known example is St. Francis of Assisi, who was depicted as a figure of Christ and as the new Elijah in

¹¹ Cnattingius B., *Maerten van Heemskerck's St. Lawrence Altar-Piece in Linköping Cathedral, Studies in its Mannerist Style* (Stockholm: 1973); also see Rohmdahl A., "Das Altarwerk von Marten Heemskerck für die Laurentiuskirche zu Alkmaar", *Oud Holland* 21 (1903) 173–74.

¹² Cnattingius, *Maerten van Heemskerck's St. Lawrence Altar-Piece* 69.

¹³ Brown Tkacz C., *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination* (Paris: 2002) 51–2. Woollcombe K.J., "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology", in Lampe G.W.H. – Woollcombe K.J. (eds.), *Essays on Typology* (Napierville: 1957) 70.

the frescoes of the upper church of San Francesco d'Assisi. The upper register of the north wall depicts an Old Testament cycle, paired with a New Testament cycle on the south wall. Underneath, the life of Saint Francis is shown in parallel.¹⁴

The eucharistic references to Christ's sacrificial body and passion on the outside wings of the St. Lawrence altar are reinforced by the passion, crucifixion, and resurrection scenes on the inside. In the *Crucifixion*, a snake and the skull and bone at the foot of the cross further remind the viewer that Christ's death on the cross redeemed Adam's original sin.¹⁵ Originally, the altarpiece was also to have two grisaille lunettes containing prophets and sibyls, reminiscent of imagery of prophecy and fulfillment in the Sistine Chapel, *Biblia pauperum*, Jan van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*, and many other pictorial sources, but ultimately these lunettes were not included in the polyptych.¹⁶

Around 1550 Heemskerck painted a triptych of which today only the two wing panels survive.¹⁷ The inner left panel depicts the *Fall* and was mirrored by *Gideon and the Fleece* on the right. Traditionally, these scenes were prefigurations associated with the Virgin Mary, referring to her role as the new Eve and her virgin conception of Christ respectively. In the *Biblia pauperum*, both images flanked the *Annunciation to the Virgin*. If the two panels at the Boymans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam that depict the *Visitation* in fact formed the outer panels of this triptych, as has been suggested convincingly by Rainald Grosshans, it is likely that the lost central panel showed a scene from the life of the Virgin, possibly a *Nativity*.¹⁸

Another traditional typological analogy found in Heemskerck's oeuvre, one that would (re)gain currency in the sixteenth century in particular,

¹⁴ Ruf G.P., *Die Fresken der Oberkirche San Francesco in Assisi, Ikonographie und Theologie* (Regensburg: 2004) 51–2. Going back at least as far as the Ottonian kings, rulers were also designated as 'typi christi'. See for instance: Kantorowicz E.H., *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: 1957); and Silverman M.J., "Notes: Aelfric's Designation of the King as *Cristes Sylfes Speligend*", *Review of English Studies* 35 (1984) 332–334.

¹⁵ Grosshans R., *Maerten van Heemskerck, die Gemälde* (Berlin: 1980) 136.

¹⁶ Harrison J.C., *The Paintings of Maerten van Heemskerck, a Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: 1987) I 341: 'twee ronden daer de profeeten ende sibyllen in staen'. Cf. Rohmdahl, "Das Altarwerk von Marten Heemskerck für die Laurentiuskirche zu Alkmaar" 173.

¹⁷ Grosshans, *Maerten van Heemskerck, die Gemälde* 192–193, cat. 74, figs. 103–104.

¹⁸ Ibidem 191–193, cat. 70, figs. 01–02.

was *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* paired with the *Crucifixion*.¹⁹ Discouraged by their difficult journey through the desert, the Israelites rebelled against Moses, asking 'why didst thou bring us out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness?'²⁰ As punishment for their lack of faith, God sent 'fiery serpents' that killed many. The Israelites repented, and God instructed Moses to 'make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live'.²¹ Ever since Christ himself prophesied that 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever that believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting', the story of the brazen serpent has been seen as a prefiguration to Christ's crucifixion (*John* 3:14–15).

Heemskerck's painted rendition of the theme is unusual in that *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* is spread out over both exterior panels, with the serpent on its pole nearly at the center, while the *Crucifixion* covers all three interior panels.²² The originally scalloped top of the triptych amplified the visual focus on the serpent atop the pole as well as on the crucified Christ depicted behind it on the inside of the altarpiece, thereby stressing visually the salvific power of the act of looking at the body of Christ. The good and the bad thief, placed on the inside wings of the triptych, buttress the message expressed by pairing the *Brazen serpent* and the *Crucifixion*, namely, that accepting Christ as the Messiah leads to salvation, whereas rejection of him results in death (indicated by the skeleton hanging in the background). Additionally, during the celebration of mass in front of the altarpiece, when the officiating priest lifted the consecrated host for the congregation to see, Heemskerck's typological imagery gained a further dimension through the visual display of the body of Christ. Devotional practice understood the elevation of the consecrated host to be the moment when meditation on (images of) the passion of Christ would culminate in the salvific act of spiritual communion.²³

¹⁹ Filedt Kok J.P. – Halsema-Kubes W. – Kloek W.Th. (eds.), *Kunst voor de Beeldenstorm: Catalogus* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam] (The Hague: 1986) 255, cat. 137–138. Heemskerck was inspired by Michelangelo's *Brazen Serpent* in the Sistine Chapel and the *Laocoön* statue in the Vatican, on which see Harrison J.C., "The *Brazen Serpent* by Maarten Van Heemskerck: Aspects of its Style and Meaning", *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 49, 2 (1990) 22.

²⁰ *Numbers* 21:5. "The Douay-Rheims Bible is used throughout this article."

²¹ *Numbers* 21:4–9.

²² At an unknown date, the wing panels were attached to each other and subsequently transferred to canvas; see Harrison, "The *Brazen Serpent* by Maarten van Heemskerck" 16.

²³ See: Falkenburg R., "Hieronimus Bosch's Mass of St. Gregory and 'Sacramental Vision'," in Lentens T. – Gormans A. (eds.), *Das Bild der Erscheinung: Die Gregorsmesse im*

Karel van Mander (1548–1606) describes another altarpiece by Heemskerck that contained the story of the *Brazen Serpent* but was innovatively paired with the *Adoration of the Magi*: ‘In the Church of St. Aechte an altarpiece with the *Three Kings*; this he designed so that one King stood in the middle panel, and one in each of the shutters; on the outside was the *Brazen Serpent* in grisaille. This was an outstandingly good work [...]’.²⁴ Unfortunately, this triptych did not survive.²⁵ The *Adoration of the Magi*, also known as the *Epiphany*, marks the beginning of the Messianic era when Christ is manifest to the gentiles who have come to adore him.²⁶ By pairing this scene with the *Brazen Serpent*, Heemskerck again focuses attention on the salvific power of (gazing at) the physical presence of the body of Christ.

On occasion, Heemskerck also applied typology in his graphic work, and more freely than in his paintings. A remarkable example is the *Patientiae Triumphus* (‘Triumph of Patience’), a series of eight engravings by Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert (1522–1590), published in 1559 by Hieronymus Cock (1518–1570).²⁷ The opening plate shows Patientia, seated on a cart drawn by personifications of Hope and Desire and trailing a chained Fortuna. The series continues with five Old Testament heroes (Isaac, Joseph, David, Job and Tobit) identified by their attributes and followed by the vices they conquered. The series closes with St. Stephen from the New

Mittelalter (Berlin: 2007) 179–180; and Scribner R., *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1800)*, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 81 (Leiden: 2001) 90–91.

²⁴ Mander K. van, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters, from the First Edition of the Schilder-Boeck (1603–1604). Preceded by the Lineage, Circumstances and Place of Birth, Life and Works of Karel van Mander, Painter and Poet, and likewise his Death and Burial, from the Second Edition of the Schilder-Boeck (1616–1618)*, ed. H. Miedema, trans. M. Hoyle, 6 vols. (Doornspijk: 1994) I 242–243, fol. 46 recto.

²⁵ The 1551 *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* in Haarlem (Frans Hals Museum, Inv.no. OS I-139) has been thought to have formed the wings of this triptych. However, Grosshans rightly argues that various figures overlap where the triptych would have opened, making it unlikely that the painting ever consisted of two separate sections; see Grosshans, *Maerten van Heemskerck, die Gemälde* 202.

²⁶ Labriola A.C. – Smeltz J.W., *The Bible of the Poor, a Facsimile and Edition of the British Library Blockbook C.9 D.2* (Pittsburg: 1990) 147–148.

²⁷ Preliminary drawings for all but the first print are still extant in various collections, on which see Veldman, *Maarten Van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism* 62, note 34. It is likely that Coornhert played an important role in the conception of the subject matter of the prints of this series; see Melion W.S., ‘The World between Good and Bad: Ilja M. Veldman, *De Wereld Tussen Goed en Kwaad: Late Prenten van Coornhert*’, *Print Quarterly* 9, 1 (1992) 88–90.

Testament, who functions as the culmination of his Old Testament predecessors and of the *Triumph of Christ*.²⁸

Here Heemskerck has creatively merged allegory and typology, making Christ's Old Testament types function as personifications of patience, who find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ himself. Their virtue made them 'into models of patience in adversity'.²⁹ The unexpected insertion of St. Stephen stresses the continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. When accused of blasphemy, Stephen recounted the history of the Jewish people, starting with Abraham. He placed himself in the Old Testament prophetic lineage when he accused his audience of failing to keep the Law and slaying the prophets who announced the coming of the Messiah. As the enraged crowd began to stone him (thereby confirming Stephen's identification of himself as a prophet), Stephen asked forgiveness for his murderers, just as Christ had done.³⁰ Consequently, the first martyr of the Christian faith bridges the Old and New Testaments and looks forward to the second coming of Christ, referred to in the last print of the series.

In the early 1550s, Heemskerck painted a number of triptychs that contain traditional typologies but also clearly show his interest in exploring different ways in which typology could be marshaled to convey meaning. Heemskerck's fascination with ancient architecture, often intrinsically supportive of the narrative depicted, naturally coincided with his interest in typology. In many prints, Heemskerck deliberately chose to insert a particular type of ancient monument, as in his *Triumphs of Petrarch* series (ca. 1565), engraved by Galle, where the *Triumph of Love* includes the temple of Venus, the *Triumph of Chastity* a Vestal temple, the *Triumph of Fame* a Colosseum-like building and triumphal obelisks, and the *Triumph of Time* a collection of ruined buildings. They testify to Heemskerck's recurrent practice to employ 'background architecture in its capacity to illustrate ideas'.³¹

²⁸ Veldman I., *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck* [exh. cat., Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem] (Haarlem: 1986) 37–46, figs. 13–20.

²⁹ Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism* 69.

³⁰ Acts 7:1–59.

³¹ Richardson T.M., "To See Yourself within It: Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Festival of Fools*", in Falkenburg – Melion – Richardson (eds.), *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* 296; also see Tschudi V.P., "The Rhetoric of Roman Monuments: Observations on an Engraving by Maarten van Heemskerck" [http://www.hum.uit.no/nordlit/6/tschudi.html#_ftn7].

Before designing the *Clades* series, Heemskerck had already depicted ruinous architecture as a carrier of typological meaning in the impressive and multi-layered print of *Balaam and the Angel*, engraved by Coornhert and published by Hieronymus Cock in 1554.³² On his way to curse the Israelites, the she-ass Balaam was riding diverged from her path to avoid an angel with a drawn sword unseen by her master. Heemskerck has depicted the moment when the she-ass remonstrates with Balaam for punishing her, just before he becomes aware of the angel. Realizing his transgression, Balaam repented and instead of cursing the Israelites blessed them and prophesied that: 'I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel', which exegetical tradition interpreted to refer to the mystery of the Incarnation.³³

On the left, an arresting complex of crumbling ruins encloses the prophet who is about to beat the she-ass. Balaam's spiritual blindness is indicated by his downward gaze as well as by these ruins that obstruct both his path and his view into the landscape vista that represents his prophetic vision of the future. The ruins illustrate the transition from Balaam's old world of the (crumbling) Old Covenant to the new world of Christ he foresaw after he recognized the angel, repented, and chose to obey God's commands.

Heemskerck's application of architecture to express typological meaning in both *Balaam and the Angel* and the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* series derives from an existing pictorial tradition in which (crumbling) architectural monuments are used to differentiate between the Old and New Dispensations. Fifteenth-century paintings such as Robert Campin's *Betrothal of the Virgin* (ca. 1420), Jan van Eyck's *Annunciation* in the *Ghent Altarpiece* (1432), his *Washington Annunciation* (ca. 1434–36), the *Friedsam Annunciation* (ca. 1450), currently attributed to Petrus Christus, and Rogier van der Weyden's 1450–52 *Bladelin Triptych* visually indicate the transformation from the Old to the New through the juxtaposition of romanescque

³² See: Melion W.S., "Exegetical Duality as a Meditative Crux in Maarten van Heemskerck's *Balaam and the Angel* in a Panoramic Landscape of 1554", in Enenkel K. – Melion, W.S. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Intersections 17 (Leiden: 2011) 391–434; and Melion W.S., "Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries", in Clifton J. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century* [exh. cat., Museum of Biblical Art, New York; Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta] (London – New York: 2009) 53–54.

³³ *Numbers* 24:17.

(Old Testament) and gothic (New Testament) architecture.³⁴ Additionally, the dilapidated palatial ruins that Gerard David (ca. 1460–1523) includes in many of his Nativity paintings, such as the *Adoration of the Magi* (ca. 1490) in Brussels and in Munich (1500–1505), or his *Nativity with Saints Jerome and Leonard and Donors* (1510–1515) in New York, refer to the former residence of King David, forefather and an important prefiguration of Christ.³⁵ Similar settings occur in works of Hugo van der Goes (ca. 1440–1482), as in the *Portinari Altarpiece* (1474–76), where the artist has made this reference explicit by including a harp, traditionally an attribute of King David, in the tympanum of the building in the central background.³⁶

Interestingly, in the early fourteenth-century *Belleville Breviary*, at the bottom of each page from the calendar an Old Testament prophet hands over a veiled prophecy and a rock from the crumbling synagogue to an apostle.³⁷ The apostle then unveils the prophecy and turns it into an article of faith. The manuscript also contains a description of an image showing: ‘a page on which the apostles assemble and build a church of the stones that they have taken and transported from the synagogue’, but unfortunately, this image has not survived.³⁸

It is significant that Maarten van Heemskerck chose typological narrative as the basis for his *Clades Judaeae Gentis*; it testifies to its potency to convey ideas and to its importance to the artist personally. The sheer size of the *Clades* series, with twenty-two engravings, is the first indication that Heemskerck intended the series to be his *magnum opus*. The *Twelve Patriarchs* (1550) and the *Victories of Emperor Charles V* (1555), the largest print series in the artist’s oeuvre besides the *Clades*, both consist of twelve prints. Secondly, the *Clades* series opens with an elaborate frontispiece that comments on the artist’s views, his artistic and exegetical authority. Series like the *Vicissitudes of Human Affairs* and the *Victories of Emperor Charles V* include opening prints.³⁹ However, these images are visually

³⁴ Panofsky E., *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols. (New York: 1971) I 134–140; also see Blum S.N., *Early Netherlandish Triptychs, a Study in Patronage* (Berkeley: 1969) 18ff.

³⁵ Ainsworth M.W., *Gerard David, Purity of Vision in an Age of Transition* (New York: 1998) 212; for the paintings, 49 (fig. 60), 10 (fig. 6), and 210 (fig. 200) respectively.

³⁶ Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs* 77–78.

³⁷ Sandler L.F., “Jean Pucelle and the Lost Miniatures of the Belleville Breviary”, *The Art Bulletin* 66, 1 (1984) 79, fig. 1.

³⁸ Ibidem 78. Illustrations in manuscripts of Augustine’s *Cité de Dieu* use the architecture to differentiate between the earthly and the heavenly cities.

³⁹ The *Victories of Emperor Charles V* had a separate frontispiece added by Hieronymus Cock and contained a dedication of the series to Philip II, Charles V’s son, in memory of

more integrated than the autonomous *Clades* frontispiece and offer no comment on how the beholder should interpret the series.

A third indicator of Heemskerck's ambitions for the *Clades* series is the presence of the artist's self-portrait on the frontispiece, the only printed image of his likeness. Van Mander reports the existence of a number of individual self-portraits at various ages, but unfortunately of these only the 1553 *Self-Portrait before the Colosseum* survives.⁴⁰ The biographer also recognizes Heemskerck in the wreathed figure standing behind the painter in Heemskerck's 1532 *St. Luke painting the Virgin*.⁴¹ That particular painting is a self-portrait in more than one way, as it testifies to the artist's fascination with antiquities, his interest in the Italianizing style of painting, and his preoccupation with memorializing himself. By contrasting the old, bespectacled painter with the young wreathed figure, as Harrison convincingly argues, Heemskerck furthermore stressed the superiority of artistic invention over execution.⁴² Heemskerck also inserted his own likeness among the donors of a number of his altarpieces, as in the St. Lawrence altarpiece and the wings to the draper's retable. In light of the relatively high number of Heemskerck's self-portraits in paint, against one single engraved portrait in an oeuvre of about 600 print designs, it becomes evident that the *Clades* series was highly significant for Heemskerck.⁴³

Clades Judaeae Gentis

The *Clades Judaeae Gentis* opens with an impressive frontispiece that portrays the artist's self-portrait in the form of a bust, surrounded by attributes of the painter and draughtsman [Fig. 1]. The bust balances precariously within a niche inserted into a large socle decorated with rams' heads

his father's achievements. On this series, see Rosier B., "The Victories of Charles V: A Series of Prints by Maarten Van Heemskerck 1555–1556", *Simiolus* 20, 1 (1990–1991) 24–38.

⁴⁰ Van Mander, *Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, ed. Miedema I 246, fol. 47 recto. For the *Self-Portrait before the Colosseum*, see Filedt Kok – Halsema-Kubes – Kloek (eds.), *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm: Catalogus* 267, cat. 148.

⁴¹ Van Mander, *Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, ed. Miedema I 238, fol. 45 recto.

⁴² Filedt Kok – Halsema-Kubes – Kloek (eds.), *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm: Catalogus* 192, cat. 70.

⁴³ Whereas larger prints were often pasted onto walls and deteriorated quickly, smaller prints were preserved in albums. By referring to the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* series as a *libellum* (booklet) on the frontispiece, and by choosing a relatively small size for its prints (ca. 14 × 20 cm.), Heemskerck associated the *Clades* with the album format.



Fig. 1. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, "Frontispiece", *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

and garlands. The text on the socle reads: 'Maarten van Heemskerck, painter, a second Apelles – that of our age – the father of (these) inventions, depicted from life'.⁴⁴ The socle stands on a large dais that addresses the viewer: 'We deliver to you, dear reader, a booklet that presents the famous vicissitudes of the Jewish people as a mirror, as an example, of what will happen if you commit an offence, both in the present as well as in the age to come'.⁴⁵ On the dais the artist sits sketching the ruins in the background, assisted by a young man.⁴⁶

Underneath the artist's bust Heemskerck depicted a coat of arms of his own invention, which features an eagle, a lion rampant (common heraldic devices), above, a winged arm holding a pen or brush, resting on a tortoise.

⁴⁴ Veldman, *Maarten Van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century* 149: 'Martinus Heemskerck, Pictor, Altri Nostri, Saeculi Apelles, in: ventionum Pater ad, vivum expressus'.

⁴⁵ 'Damus tibi benigne lector, uno libello tanquam in speculo exhibitas, memorabiliores Judaeae gentis clades, ut delictorum semper comites, ita cum praesenti, tum posterae aetati pro exemplis futuras'. (My translation.)

⁴⁶ Saunders, "Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck" 225. His *Self-Portrait before the Colosseum* likewise includes a sketching figure.

Van Mander explains that it: '[...] represents (I believe) Apelles' advice not to be too sluggish regarding work, nor to overburden the spirit with too many details – which was impressed upon Protogenes, as is mentioned elsewhere'.⁴⁷ The motto visualized by the wings and the tortoise resulted from the combination of the popular *festina lente* ('make haste slowly'), the Roman Emperor Augustus' favorite maxim, and the story of Apelles, who knew 'when to take his hand away from a picture'.⁴⁸ Heemskerck was probably inspired by one of Hadrianus Junius's emblems, which the humanist had adapted from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.⁴⁹

The frontispiece serves as a reminder that Heemskerck went to Rome and studied the architectural and sculptural remains of the ancients. It argues for the importance of studying these remains as a vital part of artistic formation and presents the artist as an *exemplum* for a new generation of painters and draftsmen. Having studied the ancient monuments to improve his art, Heemskerck claims to have surpassed even Apelles, presenting himself as the new Apelles of the age. Furthermore, the presence of his self-portrait as part of a larger Roman triumphal monument testifies to his authority as an interpreter of ancient monuments. By extension, his authority as a painter and interpreter of antique architectural forms implicitly affirms his moral and exegetical authority as an interpreter of biblical history.

Opening the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* is *Noah's Sacrifice* [Fig. 2].⁵⁰ Dissatisfied with the sins of mankind, God decided to wash the earth clean. He ordered Noah to build an ark so that he and his family, with representatives of the animals, were kept safe, while 'all the fountains of the

⁴⁷ Van Mander, *Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, ed. Miedema I 246, fol. 247 recto: '[...] wesende (als ick acht) t'advijs van Apelles, van niet te traegh in arbeyt te wesen/ noch den geeft met al te veel wercken niet t'overladen/ ghelijck Protogeni voor ghehouden wiert/ als elder verhaelt is'.

⁴⁸ Pliny, *Natural History Volume IX, Libri Xxxiii–Xxxv*, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), 321. Erasmus discussed the motto *festina lente* in his *Adagio*, and it 'became the most widely cherished Renaissance maxim; and those who chose it as a device made a sport of expressing the same idea by an unlimited variety of images.' Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967) 98.

⁴⁹ Colonna F., *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, the Strife of Love in a Dream*, trans. J. Godwin (London: 1999), 133. According to Edward Wind, 'the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia* alone show more than eighty variations of *festina lente*, each one of them giving a new twist to the theme'. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries* 103. He the image chosen by Junius for his 1565 *Emblemata* as 'the union of contraries [...] ciphered through an extravagant contrapost, whose very absurdity makes the image memorable'. On Heemskerck's device, see Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism* 150–51.

⁵⁰ *Genesis* 8:20–22.



Fig. 2. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, "Noah's Sacrifice", *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

great deep were broken up, and the flood gates of heaven were opened'.⁵¹ After the flood water had receded, 'the ark rested [...] upon the mountains of Armenia'.⁵² To express their gratitude at being saved, Noah built an altar and made a whole-burnt offering (holocaust), which Heemskerck has depicted in the lower left foreground. A rainbow, the sign of God's new covenant with Noah, is shown next to the ark in the background behind an intact triumphal column.⁵³ The caption reads: 'The flood receding, Noah places a rich holocaust upon the altars, and the vapor rises heavenward'.⁵⁴

Heemkerck's choice to open with *Noah's Sacrifice*, rather than any other biblical episode, is highly significant.⁵⁵ The narrative provided the

⁵¹ Ibidem 7: 11.

⁵² Ibidem 8: 4.

⁵³ Ibidem 8: 20–21, 9: 13.

⁵⁴ 'Prima Noe imponit pingues holocausta per aras Decrescente unda, penetravit ad aethera nidor'. The translations of the captions below the *Clades* prints are mine.

⁵⁵ Heemskerck may have drawn inspiration from the Sistine ceiling. There, after the scenes of *Creation* and the *Fall of Adam and Eve*, Michelangelo inserts a scene of *Noah's Sacrifice*, the *Flood*, and *Noah's Drunkenness*. The first and the last of these are smaller and clearly corollary to the "Flood".

artist with a way of introducing the main theme of the series, namely, the estrangement between God and mankind that is seen to grow as the series progresses. The dominant presence of the ruins, not mentioned in the biblical narrative, testifies to God's retributive justice that destroys the works of sinful humankind. Noah's sacrifice expresses his gratitude for the salvation offered him by God, who then renews his covenant, placing the rainbow in the sky. This is the only print in the series where God and the Israelites are shown directly interacting.

The choice to begin with scenes from the story of Noah may also have been influenced by Italian theological treatises, in which Noah was 'said to have mediated between the Old and the New Dispensation', as he had seen the world before and after the flood.⁵⁶ Noah's sacrifice, for instance as depicted by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, was seen as '[...] a prophetic act, humbly performed in the foreknowledge that man's covenant with God would ultimately be [re-]established by a unique and exceptional sacrifice, of which his own was merely a symbol or type'.⁵⁷

Paired with *Noah's Sacrifice* is the *Mocking of Noah*, which continues the biblical story [Fig. 3].⁵⁸ Noah planted a vineyard (visible in the background), but overindulged on his own vintage, and became intoxicated. Heemskerck shows him lying drunk with his genitals uncovered, as his son Cham makes fun of him. Cham's brothers Sem and Japeth, however, take a cloak and cover their father's body. Above Noah's head Heemskerck depicts a goat, an animal often associated with wine, drunkenness, and the cult of Bacchus. In fact, the text below the image makes this reference explicit: 'Noah, being conquered by Bacchus, sleeps while greatly exposed, and Cham laughs at his father's uncovered genitals'.⁵⁹ When Noah woke up, he cursed Cham and his offspring.

The architecture in the *Mocking of Noah* seems partly intact and partly ruinous, and Noah's family are thus forced to create a make-shift home. Despite the renewal of the covenant between God and man in the previous print, Noah has fallen into sin and inadvertently tempted his son Cham into committing a transgression. The ruins exemplify the increasing distance and estrangement between God and his people, and can be seen to be prophetic of the ultimate destruction of the Temple, when the

⁵⁶ Wind, *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo: The Sistine Ceiling* (Oxford: 2000) 52.

⁵⁷ Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen* 52–53.

⁵⁸ *Genesis* 9:21–23.

⁵⁹ 'Dormit in aprico multo Noe victus Iaccho, et nudata patris ridet genitalia Chamus'.



Fig. 3. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Mocking of Noah”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

breaking of the Old Covenant is made painfully manifest, as visualized by the last print of the series.

Cham's grandson, King Nimrod, features prominently in the next pair of prints that depict the *Tower of Babel* and the *Destruction of the Tower of Babel*.⁶⁰ He is overseeing the building of a mighty tower, intended to touch the heavens.⁶¹ Nimrod's crown resembles the one God wears in *Noah's Sacrifice* and exemplifies his arrogance.⁶² The caption comments: ‘Behold! In their pride they build a large edifice, and in their might they were creating a peak that would touch the clouds, a peak that would touch

⁶⁰ For images of the prints not illustrated here, see Veldman I., *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700: Maarten van Heemskerck*, ed. G. Luijten, 2 vols. (Roosendaal: 1993) 200–214, figs. 37–58.

⁶¹ *Genesis* 10:6–8, 11:5–9. On the Tower of Babel, see Carroll M., *Painting and Politics in Northern Europe: Van Eyck, Bruegel, Rubens, and their Contemporaries* (University Park: 2008) 75.

⁶² Saunders, “Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck” 227.

the stars'.⁶³ Ultimately, the people were punished for their presumption: unable to understand each other, they ceased building and scattered.⁶⁴

The Tower of Babel already had a considerable pictorial tradition, in which the Tower is generally shown to be under construction, since the Bible makes no actual mention of its destruction.⁶⁵ However, in the *Clades* series, the violent destruction is shown in both prints: after a fierce fire of divine wrath hits the tower, it collapse, as the people flee. Again, through the destruction of a large, man-made edifice, God shows his displeasure over man's sinful acts.

The *Clades* series continues with two scenes from the story of Lot: *Lot and his Family Leaving Burning Sodom* and *Lot and his Daughters*. God decides to punish the inhabitants of the sinful city of Sodom by completely destroying it, but offers Abraham's cousin Lot safe passage out of the city. Heemskerck depicts two angels leading Lot and his family to safety. Lot's wife turns around to witness the destructions (against a divine injunction) and in consequence turns into a salt pillar. The caption relates: 'Behold! Both Lot and his wife were singled out and are being guided out of Sodom. See, the wife turned into a rock of solid salt'.⁶⁶

Like Noah, Lot and his family were saved from mass annihilation but despite this, also like Noah, Lot became intoxicated on alcohol and thereby facilitated the subsequent sins of his offspring, as the following print, *Lot and his Daughters*, shows.⁶⁷ Thinking they were the last people on earth, Lot's daughters contrived to get their father drunk so he would impregnate them. Through this unlawful act, their offspring were forever cursed. Heemskerck chose to depict the moment when the transgression takes place, while the second daughter who sits outside the cave reveals her sorrow at their plight through her crouching pose. Visually the scenes

⁶³ 'En molem aedificant animisque, opibusque parati, vertice qua nubes, et vertice tangeret astra'. The caption to the *Destruction of the Tower of Babel* reads: 'Built by the great strength of man, mighty Babylon falls, these lands shake and the mortals scatter'. ('Alta cadit Babylon multa constructa virum vi, concutit haec terras, mortalia pectora sternit'.)

⁶⁴ *Genesis* 11:5–7.

⁶⁵ See: Minkowski H., *Vermütungen über den Turm zu Babel* (Freren: 1991); and Weiner S.E., *The Tower of Babel in Netherlandish Painting* (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University: 1985).

⁶⁶ 'Ducitur e Sodoma Loth uxor et utraque nota Concretique salis coniunx trahit ecce rigorem'. This is a paraphrase of *Genesis* 19:26.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem* 19: 30–38. The caption reads: 'Behold! By pouring out a great deal of wine, the ignorant father (how shocking!) cleaves to the embrace of his daughters and deflowers them'. ('En pater (infandum) natarum amplexibus haeret inscius has vitiat diffusus nectare multo'.)

of the *Mocking of Noah* and *Lot and his Daughters* are interrelated through the placement of the protagonists in the lower left corner and through the cloth tied over the figures that identifies both locations as makeshift homes.

At this point in the series there is a slight change of tone. In the first six prints, God shows his displeasure over sins committed by mankind by destroying buildings on a large scale. The next two pairs of prints center on the military exploits of Joshua. Here the divine destruction of architecture functions as a mark of divine favor. In the *Destruction of Jericho*, for example, Joshua follows God's orders to march around the city of Jericho with the ark of the covenant and trumpets sounding [Fig. 4]. Consequently the walls collapsed and the Israelites took the city.⁶⁸ Joshua '[...] killed all that were in [the city], man and woman, young and old. The oxen also and the sheep, and the asses, they slew with the edge of the sword.'⁶⁹ Like the flood preceding *Noah's Sacrifice* and like the *Destruction of Sodom* were comprehensive, so here every living thing is obliterated.

However, Achan, one of Joshua's men, disobeyed Joshua's command not to touch the spoils of war (dedicated to God). The *Stoning of Achan and the Destruction of Ai* shows him being put to death as a punishment for his transgression in taking some of the plunder.⁷⁰ Achan's disobedience had resulted in the defeat of the Israelites at the siege of Ai, for which '[...] all Israel stoned him: and all things that were his were consumed with fire. And they gathered together upon him a great heap of stones, which remaineth until this present day'.⁷¹ After Achan's death, the Israelites were allowed to conquer the city of Ai, shown ablaze in the background. Here, it is no longer God who personally destroys the city; rather, he allows the Israelites to do it themselves as a reward for their obedience. A large cult statue of a male god holding lightning bolts in his hand

⁶⁸ The caption reads: 'Jericho falls by circling the entire city with the ark of the covenant, and the cry of the people and the sound of the war trumpets'. ('Corruit Hiercho totam cum circuit urbem Arca Dei voce et populi, et clangore tubarum'.)

⁶⁹ *Joshua* 7:21. Only Rahab the harlot and her family were spared, because she had hidden Joshua's spies in her house, saving them from being apprehended.

⁷⁰ Veldman, *The New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* I 201, cat. 45. Cf. *Joshua* 7:25, 8:19–20.

⁷¹ *Ibidem* 7: 25–26. 'All things that were his' included his possessions, but also his family. The caption reads: 'Through the flying of stones, the life of covetous Achan ends, and everything of his was consumed by fire'. ('Finit Achan vitam per sapa volantia avarus huius quicquid erat multo consumitur igni'.) There seems to be a mistake in the Latin: the word *sapa* ('new wine boiled and condensed') replaces the more likely *saxa* (from *saxum*), which means rocks or stones.



Fig. 4. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Destruction of Jericho”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis*, (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

is revealed as the building around it collapses. The idol functions as an additional justification for the destruction of the idolatrous Ai and visually connects to the next two prints.⁷²

The *King of Ai Hanged* and the *Body of the King of Ai Brought to the City Gate* together depict only a single bible verse: ‘And he hung the king thereof on a gibbet until the evening and the going down of the sun. Then Josue commanded, and they took down his carcass from the gibbet: and they threw it in the very entrance of the city, heaping upon it a great heap of stones, which remaineth until this day’.⁷³ Heemskerck has depicted the King of Ai hanging from a gibbet in the foreground, his sword and arms (decorated with the lightning bolts previously associated with the cult statue) hanging beside him. By placing the king’s arms on the gibbet as well, Heemskerck indicates that with the burning of Ai (in the background) and the death of its king, its idolatrous practices were also

⁷² Saunders, “Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck” 228.

⁷³ *Joshua* 8:29.

destroyed.⁷⁴ Thematically, as well as visually, this image, with its tents at lower left and recently ruined buildings, is reminiscent of the previous prints.

The *Body of the King of Ai Brought to the City Gate* concludes the narrative of Joshua and includes two moments in the story: the body of the king has been taken down and placed on a stretcher, and in the background, it has been covered with a pile of rubble.⁷⁵ In burying the king, the Israelites are actually actively building a ruin, a victory monument that alludes ironically to the moral imperfection of its builders. The story of the King of Ai recalls the fate of Achan, for both were executed and buried under stones 'which remaineth until this present day'.⁷⁶ However, the king was honored by being executed by hanging rather than stoning and the body of Achan was burned, a fate the king was also spared. It would seem that in this analogy, the fire stands for the purification of sin and exemplified the consequence of invoking divine wrath (Achan had stolen property beholden to God, and the King of Ai committed idolatry). Saunders correctly concludes: 'Finally, the removal of the king from the gallows and his burial under an enormous pile of stone rubble at the city gate completed the victory of the Jews and their obligation to the Lord to effect the total destruction of Ai.'⁷⁷

The following set of scenes, *Samson Destroying the Temple of the Philistines* and the *Burial of Samson* continue the shift of destructive agency from God to man.⁷⁸ When Delilah had cut off Samson's hair, the source of his great strength, the Philistines were finally able to take him captive. While celebrating their victory the Philistines demanded that Samson be summoned to entertain them. As they brought him up from his cell, Samson asked a boy to direct him to the columns supporting the building so he could lean and rest. As his hair was already starting to grow back, Samson prayed to God to return his strength to him as well. Heemskerck shows the moment when Samson embraced both columns and pulled them down, causing the entire building to collapse: 'And he killed many

⁷⁴ The caption reads: 'Having taken the celebrated city of Ai, it burns (by divine command) they fastened bonds to the neck of the fearful king.' From the Latin: 'Nobilis ardit Hay (divino numine) capta, Regis et aptantur pallenti cinctula collo.'

⁷⁵ The caption: 'They took down the lifeless body from the raised beam, and covered the cast down body with a large pile of stones.' ('Stipite de celso corpus iam exangue refiunt Abiectum mango lapidum tumulatur aceruo.')

⁷⁶ *Joshua* 7:26 and 8:29.

⁷⁷ Saunders, "Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck" 228.

⁷⁸ *Judges* 16:25–30 and 16:31.



Fig. 5. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Burial of Samson”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

more at his death, than he had killed before in his life.⁷⁹ Rather than showing another scene of divine mass annihilation, it is Samson (with divine assistance) who kills a great number of the enemies of the Israelites.

The *Burial of Samson* has little or no previous pictorial tradition [Fig. 5]. The fallen hero is being honored for his last deed.⁸⁰ His body is carried on a donkey amidst a procession of his kindred, recognizable from the emblem of asses’ jaws and honey bees, references to other episodes from his life.⁸¹ Behind the procession, a ruinous building testifies to Samson’s triumph. Heemskerck’s caption reads: ‘With great sorrow the wretched body exceeding human excellence was consigned to the earth, attended by sad brothers of repute.’⁸² Like Joshua, Samson is (posthumously) rewarded for having been the instrument of divinely sanctioned destruction.

⁷⁹ Ibidem 16: 30. The caption reads: ‘Samson embraced a column with his right arm and one with his left arm and threw down the lofty dwelling to great ruins’. (‘Utramque implicuit dextra laevaque columnam Sampson, et ingenti cecidit domus alta ruina’.)

⁸⁰ *Judges* 16:31.

⁸¹ Ibidem 14: 5–9 (the lion and the honey) and 16: 14–19 (the jawbone of an ass).

⁸² ‘Cum gemitu mandatur humo miserabile corpus superbum maesti fratres comitantur honorem’.

Between two large columns, behind the procession, a small figure carries a body. Saunders observes: 'In the background, a Philistine corpse is borne off by a single figure without the honorable ceremony accorded to the Israelite hero, an anecdote which provides an ironic anti-type to the foreground scene'.⁸³ However, another association comes to mind – a statue of Hercules and Antaeus that Heemskerck drew while in Rome. He included it in the *Landscape with Classical Ruins and St. Jerome*, a painting of 1547, now in the collection of the Liechtenstein museum, as well as in an engraving of the same composition published by Cock in 1552.⁸⁴ Hercules was challenged by Antaeus, the son of Gaea. Hercules could not defeat him until he realized that his opponent drew his strength from the earth. By lifting him off his feet, Hercules succeeded in crushing him. After his victory, he marched onward, finally reaching the Atlantic Ocean, where he erected two pillars. In the *Burial of Samson*, the figure of Hercules is still holding his limp opponent's feet in the air. The figures are placed between two large columns that could refer to the Pillars of Hercules, as well as to the columns Samson tore down in the temple of the Philistines.⁸⁵ A visual reference to the ancient hero Hercules (incidentally, like Samson, a figure of Christ) serves to celebrate Samson's superhuman strength.

Saunders suggests that Heemskerck drew on a pamphlet issued by Cock and Christopher Plantin (1520–1589), depicting the funeral of Emperor Charles.⁸⁶ In fact the presence of Hercules serves to strengthen Saunders' conclusion that 'Samson's destruction of the pagan Philistines parallels the accomplishments of Charles V, a noted defender of the Catholic Church and Holy Roman Empire against Protestant encroachment', since the two Herculean columns feature as part of the Emperor's coat of arms. However, the association with Charles V, while not at all unlikely, is secondary,

⁸³ Saunders, "Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck" 229.

⁸⁴ On this engraving, see Veldman, *The New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* 249, cat. 588; and DiFuria A.J., "Remembering the Eternal in 1553: Maerten van Heemskerck's *Self-Portrait before the Colosseum*", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009) 94. Heemskerck also included Hercules and Antaeus in a series of paintings portraying the gods.

⁸⁵ The Pillars of Hercules formed part of Charles V's coat of arms. In antiquity the two pillars marked the end of the known world. After the discovery of the Americas, they became the symbols of access to the new world. Heemskerck depicted these pillars in *Emperor Charles V amidst his Vanquished Adversaries* (1556), the opening page of the *Victories of Emperor Charles* print series, on which see Rosier, "Victories of Charles V" 24–38.

⁸⁶ Saunders, "Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten Van Heemskerck" 274.



Fig. 6. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Capture of Tirsah”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

as it applies only to this particular print; it has no bearing on the overall meaning of Heemskerck's series.⁸⁷

The *Capture of Tirsah* and the *People of Israel Divided between Tibni and Omri* show the increasing distancing between God and the Israelites, who now take matters into their own hands, lacking divine guidance [Fig. 6].⁸⁸ Army captain Zimri killed the Israelite King Elah (drunk at the time), in the house of the governor of Tirsah. Zimri then ruled in his stead and proceeded to kill the rest of Elah's family, which the Bible explains as a punishment from God for the idolatry and sins of the house of Baasa (3 *Kings* 16:11–13). However, upon hearing the news, the Israelite army proclaimed their commander Omri king and proceeded to besiege the city of Tir-

⁸⁷ Saunders, in *ibidem* 239, notes that ‘the figures offer no clues because of the uniformity of their vaguely classicizing costumes, unbroken by any contemporary intrusions’.

⁸⁸ 3 *Kings* 16:17–19, 3 *Kings* 16:21–22. It is clear from the rarity of the scene and the formal similarities between Heemskerck's print and Bernard Salomon's (ca. 1506–1561) version of this subject that the latter served as an example for the former. See: Paradin Claude, *Quadrins historiques de la Bible* (Lyon: J. de Tournes, 1558), “Rois XVI”; and Saunders, “Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck” 100.

sah. When Zimri realized the city would fall, he burnt the palace down, immolating himself, and was thus seen to be punished for his sins against God and the people of Israel.⁸⁹ Heemskerck shows the figure of Zimri against the flames of the burning palace, the bridge to which the Israelites have stormed.

The story of Zimri offers a number of parallels to other scenes from the *Clades* series. King Elah, in his drunkenness, facilitated not only his own murder but also that of his offspring, which is reminiscent of *Noah's Drunkenness* and *Lot and his Daughters*. Like Joshua and Jehu (in the next pair of prints), Zimri killed a reigning king, and like Jehu he proceeded to murder the entire royal family. However, the difference between Jehu and Zimri is that the latter proclaimed himself king, instead of being anointed by God. So even as Zimri functions as an instrument of God in destroying the house of Baasa, his usurpation of power was not justified, and he was punished accordingly. Furthermore, both Zimri and Samson committed suicide. But whereas Samson was celebrated for it because he killed many of his enemies in the process, Zimri's suicide was solely considered a punishment. Like Achan, he took what was not his, and his body burned. The architectural destruction, although it serves indirectly to signal that his sins are being duly punished, was not instigated by God but by Zimri himself. The distance between God and his people is thus shown to have again increased.

The next scene, the *People of Israel Divided between Tibni and Omri*, continues the narrative. After the palace of Tirsah had burnt down, Omri's elected leadership was challenged. The Bible says: 'Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts. One half of the people followed Thebni the son of Gineth, to make him king: and one half followed Amri. But the people that were with Amri, prevailed over the people that followed Thebni son of Gineth: and Thebni died and Amri reigned'.⁹⁰ In the print the divided soldiers are standing before a partly collapsed temple and a stone aqueduct.⁹¹ The figure at the center, apparently resolving the situation, might be Omri who ultimately prevailed. Again, the Israelites manage their own affairs instead of relying directly on divine guidance.

⁸⁹ 3 *Kings* 16:18–19. The caption reads: 'Ah! Zambri the king is killed, he was surrounded by an army, and he and his palace perished in a fierce fire'. ('Hela cadit, regnat Zambri, qui milite cinctus seque suamque domum rapidos coniecit in ignis'.)

⁹⁰ 3 *Kings* 16:21–22.

⁹¹ The caption reads: 'Israel is divided, in order to create a king, both sides entered in competition, and Thebni succumbed and Amri prevailed'. ('Scinditur Israhel, rex parte creatur utraque pugnam ineunt, Thebni succumbit praevallet Amri'.)

The series continues with *Jehu Destroying the Temple and Statue of Baal* and *Jehu Adoring the Golden Calves*, which take up the theme of idolatry previously adduced in the destruction of (the king of) Ai.⁹² By order of the prophet Elisha, Jehu is anointed king of Israel, having been divinely instructed to end the idolatry of the reigning house of Omri's son Achab.⁹³ Jehu proceeds to kill the whole of Achab's family. In order to eradicate the Baal cult that Achab had tolerated, Jehu had the priests of Baal proclaim a festival and invite their colleagues from all over the country. After the priests had seated themselves in the temple, Jehu ordered his men to kill them. Then they took the statue of Baal, destroyed it, and burnt down the temple.⁹⁴

After the destruction of the temple of Baal, the area was turned into a sewer [Fig. 7].⁹⁵ Both the caption ('The open space of the temple was turned into a foul sewer; nevertheless he judged the divine calves worthy of honor.') and Heemskerck's image, which shows a small figure relieving himself in the far right corner, reflect this part of the biblical narrative.⁹⁶ To the left, Jehu has erected a large statue of four calves on a socle reminiscent of the one in the frontispiece (it has similar rams' heads and garlands). Like his predecessors Noah and Lot, Jehu enjoys divine favor when he eradicates the cult of Baal, but this cannot prevent him from falling into sin again, in his case the very sin he was trying to eradicate—idolatry.⁹⁷ As God's punishment of sin through the destruction of man-made structures failed to eradicate sinful behavior early in the series, so Jehu's similar attempt has even less of an effect, as he himself succumbs to sin.

Approaching the end of the series, Heemskerck shows the *Chaldeans Carrying Away the Pillars of the Temple* and the *Chaldeans Carrying Away the Temple Treasures*.⁹⁸ After a long period in Jewish history when divine

⁹² 4 *Kings* 10:26–27 and 29–31.

⁹³ As in the case of Noah, Lot, and Jehu, divine favour initially bestowed does not prevent Omri from falling into sin, as 3 *Kings* 16:25 makes clear: 'And Amri did evil in the sight of the Lord, and acted wickedly above all that were before him'. His son Achab in turn exceeded his father in sinfulness, which resulted in the destruction of his ruling house.

⁹⁴ The caption for this print reads: 'Courageous Jehu destroyed the great god Baal, and he burned the ruined colossus'. ('Grande bahal numen fortis disiecit jehu, cunctaque combussit disiecti dona colossi'.)

⁹⁵ 4 *Kings* 10:27 'They destroyed also the temple of Baal, and made a jakes in its place unto this day'.

⁹⁶ 'Areaque est temple in tetram mutata cloacam, Apse tamen dium vitulis decernit honorem'.

⁹⁷ Saunders, "Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck" 269.

⁹⁸ 4 *Kings* 25:9 and 4 *Kings* 25:13–17.



Fig. 7. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, "Jehu Adoring the Golden Calves", *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

favours alternated with divine wrath dispensed to punish misconduct, these prints introduce the period of the Babylonian exile. God no longer punishes the Israelites himself, or lets them punish each other for their transgressions, but now acts through their enemies. The troops of Nebuchadnezzar raided and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, robbed the temple of its ornaments and precious metals, and deported the people to Babylon. The first caption reads: 'As an insult to the fatherland, the Chaldeans carried offerings weighty with gold and both the bases and columns, towards the border'; and the second: 'The great sun had crossed the sky for nine years, and then (under Sedechia) the temple was ravaged by siege engines'.⁹⁹

The design of the building is clearly modeled on the Pantheon, a favorite subject of Heemskerck's Roman sketches that appears in a great number of his prints in various guises (as temple of the sun, temple of Bel, and the

⁹⁹ 'Dona auro gravia, et bases, binasque columnas Insultans patrias transfert Chaldaeus ad oras'. 'Sol novies magnum se circumvolverat annum (Sub te Sedechia) vastatur machina templi'. Cf. 4 *Kings* 25:1.

Jewish temple).¹⁰⁰ The size of the building and the pattern of destruction are reminiscent of the *Tower of Babel*, and the *Destruction of the Tower of Babel* respectively, which serves as a reminder that the Chaldean victory was a (mediated) instrument of divine punishment.¹⁰¹ However, while God himself destroyed the Tower of Babel, here Israel's enemies, exemplified by three human figures, are actually physically engaged in destroying the buildings with pickaxes.

Unexpectedly the series continues with two New Testament nativity scenes: the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Adoration of the Magi* [Figs. 8 and 9].¹⁰² For the first time since *Noah's Sacrifice*, the divine is visually present again, by means of three angels, the light from the star of Bethlehem, and the divine light that the Christ child himself emits. Also, the ruinous space canopied with a piece of fabric that resembles the space in which the family of Noah resided in the background of the *Mocking of Noah*, now functions as the setting for the print's main narrative point. With the birth of Christ, the ruins become habitable once more.¹⁰³

The architectural setting of the *Adoration of the Magi* is a contemporary building with a number of circular *oculi* in the roof, through which divine light enters to illuminate the shadowy scene. The Virgin and child are placed at the heart of an ascending brick ramp that circles around them, supported by ionic columns. Two of the Magi are depicted in the left and right foreground, while the third adores the child.¹⁰⁴ Horst Bredekamp has identified this construction as the Belvedere staircase, designed by Donato Bramante, in the Vatican Cortile del Belvedere in Rome.¹⁰⁵ However, as Bredekamp points out, Heemskerck has partly made the structure into a ruin, with spaces opening to the outside world, holes in the roof, and

¹⁰⁰ Bredekamp H., "Maarten van Heemskercks Bildersturmzyklen als Angriffe auf Rom", in Scribner R. – Warnke M., *Bilder und Bildersturm im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: 1990) 211–13.

¹⁰¹ 4 *Kings* 25:19–20: 'And [Sedechias] did evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that Joakim had done. For the Lord was angry against Jerusalem and against Juda, till he cast them out from his face. And Sedechias revolted from the king of Babylon'.

¹⁰² *Luke* 2:8–15 (Annunciation of the Nativity to the Shepherds), *Luke* 2:16–18 (Adoration of the Shepherds) and *Matthew* 2:11 (Adoration of the Magi).

¹⁰³ The caption reads: 'Christ is present in this sanctuary, the Mother is sitting down on her knee, the shepherds are present and the golden angels sing from heaven'. ('Aeditus hic Christus, subsidet poplite Mater adsunt pastores, fulva canit, ales ab aethra'.)

¹⁰⁴ The caption reads: 'A star marks the roof of the hut built from turf, setting out from the east, the magi bear gifts for the child'. ('Stella notat tuguri congestum cespice culmen, dona magi peuro portent oriente profecti'.)

¹⁰⁵ Bredekamp, "Maarten van Heemskercks Bildersturmzyklen als Angriffe auf Rom" 215.



Fig. 8. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Adoration of the Shepherds”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).



Fig. 9. Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Adoration of the Magi”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).



Fig. 10. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, the “Destruction of Jerusalem”, *Clades Judaeae Gentis* (1569). Engraving, ca. 14 × 20 cm. Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (photo: Peter Maes).

vegetation creeping in. Not only does this allow for the light of the star to illuminate the scene, but it also indicates that the ultimate restoration of the relationship between God and his people, and the road to salvation, starts with the birth of Christ. The birth of the Messiah calls forth a new age, a new way to approach or return to God (visualized by the upwards sloping ramp). The process of ruination is reversed as the architecture again has a purpose to fulfill in salvation history.

The series concludes with the *Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus* [Fig. 10].¹⁰⁶ In the second half of the first century, the Jewish people revolted against the rule of the Romans. Titus and his army crushed the rebellion by besieging and finally destroying the city of Jerusalem, the centre of the resistance, in 70 AD. Heemskerck’s ultimate source for this image was the eyewitness account of Flavius Josephus (ca. 37–100 AD), recorded in *De bello judaico*

¹⁰⁶ The caption reads: ‘Jerusalem is in the hands of Titus and the temple, wealthy through its offerings, is utterly consumed by a blazing fire, by the highest divine command’. (‘Titus habens Solymas flammis radicatus urit et templum donis opulentum et numine summi’.)

and transmitted either through translations of the original text or various medieval adaptations.¹⁰⁷ From the twelfth century onwards, various manuscript editions were circulating. The first printed edition of Josephus' narrative appeared in 1470, published by Johann Schüssler in Augsburg, and was followed by ten Latin and three vernacular editions throughout Europe.¹⁰⁸ After the second half of the sixteenth century, these books were embellished with woodcut illustrations, mainly showing a range of medieval legends that had attached themselves to Josephus's account. The destruction of the Jewish Temple as depicted by Heemskerck occurs only very rarely.¹⁰⁹

Jacob van Maerlant (ca. 1225–1300) translated and revised a Latin version of Josephus' Greek text, issuing it as *De wrake van Jherusalem* in 1271. It continued to be transcribed, although in many of these editions the rhyme scheme was removed. An example is the 1482 edition by Gerard Leeu of Gouda, published under the title *Die destructie van Jherusalem*, and reissued by Nicolaes van Winghe in 1552.¹¹⁰ Willem Vorsterman published *De destructie vander stat van Jherusalem* in 1525 in Antwerp, basing his edition on a twelfth-century Old French *chanson de geste* called *La vengeance de nostre Seigneur*. In addition to these publications, Heemskerck was likely familiar with Dutch history Bibles, which incorporated elements from Josephus' narrative.¹¹¹

It is important to note that Josephus was a Jew who had fought in the rebellion, but ended up as Titus' protégé. He rewrote his Aramaic diary into a Greek war story that shines a very favourable light on the actions of his patron. According to Josephus, Titus did not burn down the Jewish

¹⁰⁷ Bunte W., *Die Zerstörung Jerusalems in der mittelniederländischen Literatur (1100–1600)* (Frankfurt: 1992).

¹⁰⁸ Deutsch G.N., "Iconographie de l'illustration de Flavius Josephe au Temps de Jean Fouquet," in Rengstorff K.H. (ed.), *Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellinistischen Judentums* (Leiden: 1986) 55–56. Also see: Poortman W., *Bijbel en prent*, 2 vols. (The Hague: 1986).

¹⁰⁹ One other example is part of a French manuscript, produced ca. 1480, on which see Deutsch, "Iconographie de l'illustration de Flavius Josephe", fig. 142.

¹¹⁰ Kuiper W., "Die destructie van Jherusalem in handschriften en druk", *Voortgang* 25 (2007) 77, note 33, 83–84; also see Braekman W.I., *Die destructie vander stat van Jherusalem. Een Vlaams volksboek, naar het uniek exemplaar van de Antwerpse druk van Willem Vorsterman* (ca. 1525) (Bruges: 1984).

¹¹¹ On history Bibles as chronicles, see Hindman Hoadley S., *Text and Illustration in the First Dutch History Bibles* (ca. 1425–1475) (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University: 1973).

Temple; rather Jewish religious fanatics were responsible.¹¹² Three different factions of zealots were fiercely fighting each other within the city itself before and during the Roman siege of Jerusalem: '[...] it so came to pass, that all the places that were about the temple were burnt to the ground, and became an intermediate desert space, ready for fighting on both sides'.¹¹³

Regarding the Temple, Josephus remarks: 'But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages'.¹¹⁴ This idea also appeared frequently in medieval literature, where the destruction of the Temple was viewed as divine punishment.¹¹⁵ Josephus says: 'Now if any one considers these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways possible foreshows to our race what is for their preservation, but that men perish by those miseries which they madly and voluntary bring upon themselves'.¹¹⁶ This idea is reflected in Heemskerck's *Clades* series in general and in its last print in particular. Titus and his troops are making their way down to the Temple, which is already burning. The Roman holds up his arms in dismay at the imminent destruction of the edifice.¹¹⁷

Heemskerck's choice to conclude with the *Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus* is consistent with the rest of the series: like the *Burial of Samson*, the *Capture of Tirsah*, and the *People of Israel Divided between Tibni and Omri*, it is a rare scene in an unexpected place, and like the *Tower of Babel* and the *Destruction of Sodom*, it features a large edifice being destroyed. Furthermore, the destruction of the Temple is the culmination of both

¹¹² As quoted in Kuper, "Die destructie van Jherusalem" 69: 'Dat Jeruzalem valt en dat de tempel van Solomon verwoest wordt geschiedt bij Josephus niet *dankzij* de Romeinen maar *ondanks* de Romeinen'.

¹¹³ Whiston W., *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus*, Vol. 6 (New York: 1839) 31: '[...] they never suffered any thing that was worse from the Romans than they made each other suffer; nor was there any misery endured by the city after these men's actions [...]'].

¹¹⁴ Ibidem 96.

¹¹⁵ Poortman, *Bijbel en prent* II 191.

¹¹⁶ Whiston, *Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus* 6 103.

¹¹⁷ Saunders notes that: 'There may, in fact, be some attempt on van Heemskerck's part to shift the blame for this devastation more towards the ill-disciplined soldiers than to their commander-in-chief by choosing from Josephus' narrative the particular moment of Titus' attempt to halt the fire.' Saunders, "Old Testament Subjects in the Prints of Maarten van Heemskerck: *Als Een Claere Spiegele Der Tegenwoordige Tijden*", 275. In fact, this shift in blame already occurs in Josephus' text: 'And now, a certain person came running to Titus, and told him of this fire, as he was resting himself in his tent after the last battle; whereupon he rose up in great haste, and, as he was, ran to the holy house, in order to have a stop put to the fire [...]'. Whiston, *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus*, 96.

the visual and narrative patterns that inform the entire series. By their rejection of Christ the Messiah, the Israelites orchestrated their own destruction, eliciting the ruination of the Temple that incontrovertibly announced the definitive rupture of the Old Covenant.

Conclusion

In the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* print series, Maarten van Heemskerck innovatively used typology to argue for the exegetical authority of the visual arts. The dominant presence of (ruinous) architecture throughout the series functions as a vehicle for the communication between God and the Jewish People. The ruins signal the increasing distance between God and his people as they continue to disregard his commands. The narrative opens with a number of prints in which the destruction of architecture is a direct result of the sinfulness of man and functions as divine punishment. Joshua's victories at Jericho and Ai show the same act of destruction as a reward for human obedience, but also introduce the shift from divine agency to human agency. Although divinely sanctioned and facilitated, Joshua and his troops destroy the city of Ai.

An important turning point in the series comes when Samson pulls down the pillars and kills his enemies. This destruction, although divinely sanctioned, is again carried out by a man, who is posthumously honored for it. However, Zimri's choice to burn down the palace of Tirsah signals again the increasing distance between God and his people. The Israelites are now seen to use the demolition of buildings increasingly for their own purpose, and they even choose their own political leaders. When mankind takes matters of sin and punishment into their own hands, they have even less success than God's destruction of the Tower of Babel or the city of Sodom. Jehu falls himself into the sin of idolatry he tried to eradicate. The Israelites are by now so far removed from their God that instead of punishing them directly, he marshalls the Chaldeans as instruments of severe divine punishment, the destruction of Jerusalem. The burning and collapsing Temple in these prints prefigures the ultimate destruction of the Temple and the definitive breaking of the Old Covenant in the last print of the series.

However, the Israelites are granted the ultimate chance of restoration, in the form of God's Son. The adoration of the Christ child will make the ruins that exemplify the broken relationship between God and man habit-

able again. The upward ramp in the *Adoration of the Magi* shows reconstructed architecture as a way up, a return to God.

However, the Israelites' refusal to recognize in Christ the Messiah ultimately results in the destruction of the Jewish Temple and the breaking of the Old Covenant. Following the narrative of Flavius Josephus, in the *Clades Judaeae Gentis* Heemskerck shows how the Jewish people orchestrated their downfall.

The last print of the series has no pendant and thereby refers the viewer back to the frontispiece, where the ruins and Heemskerck's portrait have acquired a whole new meaning. Close observation of ancient ruins and statuary has not only perfected the master's artistic skills, but also indicates his understanding of God's plan for mankind. In his prints Heemskerck presents a series of visual and narrative patterns that indicate manifestations of divine authority in salvation history. Where the Israelites fail to see that their God is communicating with them through the destruction (and reconstruction) of architecture, the artist recognized the instrumental value of man-made objects as a means for God to communicate with his people.

The viewer examining Heemskerck's prints is urged to consider the relationship between each of the individual prints and their relevance to the overall narrative. Through a complex print series of a size unprecedented in his oeuvre and furthermore prominently featuring his own portrait as a venerable and timeless monument, Heemskerck presents himself not only as an artistic authority (having studied the ancient monuments extensively), but even more as an exegetical authority (having studied the Scriptures equally thoroughly). His *Clades Judaeae Gentis* series offers the viewers an intriguing insight in the patterns of divine will that emerge from the biblical account, while simultaneously arguing for the exegetical authority of the visual arts.

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MODES OF SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATION:
THE BEATITUDES IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

James Clifton

- 1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him.
- 2 And opening his mouth, he taught them, saying:
- 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.
- 5 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- 6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.
- 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8 Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.
- 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- 10 Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake:
- 12 Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you.

(*Matthew* 5:1–12)¹

Jesus's Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew* 5–7) has always been seen as the centerpiece or summation of his teaching.² Particularly salient within the Sermon, standing at the beginning of it, are the Beatitudes, which are numbered variously, but usually seven or, in the early modern period especially, eight. They appear *in extenso* only in *Matthew*; a briefer, variant version with complementary Woes is in *Luke* 6:20–26, in the Sermon on

¹ *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Translated from the Latin Vulgate Diligently Compared with the Original Greek and First Published by the English College at Rheims, A.D. 1582* (Baltimore: 1899; reprint ed., Rockford, Ill.: 1971) 7. The Vulgate follows a slightly different order than that favored by the Greek Fathers, as well as Calvin and other Reformers, with the second and third Beatitudes – those who mourn and the meek – reversed.

² Betz H.D., *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20–49)*, ed. A.Y. Collins (Minneapolis: 1995) 10. I am grateful to Thomas F. Ryan for bringing this book to my attention.

the Plain. The exegetical tradition of both the Sermon on the Mount as a whole and the Beatitudes in particular is a long, deep, and wide river, with particularly influential commentary by Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Nicholas of Lyra and the *Glossa ordinaria*, and Thomas Aquinas, followed by the Reformers and a useful compilation on the Catholic side in this period from the Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide. Yet there is no comparably extensive visual tradition: before the early modern period, the Beatitudes took various forms, but were most often represented as women holding scrolls.³ Nonetheless, in the second half of the sixteenth century and early in the seventeenth century in the Netherlands, the Beatitudes were illustrated several times and in remarkably different ways, to such an extent that they provide fertile ground for a partial taxonomy of modes of depiction in scriptural illustration. I shall proceed from the more concrete of modes – narrative and exemplificatory – toward the more abstract – figurative, hieroglyphic, and verbal, moving from *allegoria in factis* to *allegoria in verbis* and tracing a progressive *Entbildung* of the representation, as it were.⁴

My concern here is more structural than iconographical or historical. All these works comprise both image and text, and I am interested in how these ‘iconotexts’ *work*, how their various parts relate to each other ‘intermedially’, and how they signify.⁵ The Beatitudes provide a rich but

³ For examples, see Demus O. *The Mosaics of San Marco*, 2 vols. (Chicago: 1984) I, 186–189, pls. 59–62, 273–304 (where they join the Virtues); Harris J.A., “The Beatitudes Casket in Madrid’s Museo Arqueológico: Its Iconography in Context”, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 53 (1990) 134–139. The texts of the Beatitudes appeared on the frame of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, associated with groups of saints, who thus functioned very loosely as exempla (on the exemplificatory mode, see below); see Philip L.B., *The Ghent Altarpiece and the Art of Jan van Eyck* (Princeton: 1971) 60, 105–107 (who notes that the Beatitudes had appeared as female figures in the rood-screen in Magdeburg); I am grateful to Jamie L. Smith for bringing this point to my attention. The Beatitudes were also associated with Paradise in diagrammatic representations in the medieval *Speculum Virginum*; see Kosmer E., “Gardens of Virtue in the Middle Ages”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978) 302–303; Esmeijer A.C., *Divina Quaternitas: A Preliminary Study in the Method and Application of Visual Exegesis* (Assen-Amsterdam: 1978) 53, 63, 147 n. 147; Weemans M., “The Earthly Paradise: Herri met de Bles’s Visual Exegesis of Genesis 1–3”, in Brusati C. – Enenkel K.A.E. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *The Authority of the Word: Reflecting on Image and Text in Northern Europe, 1400–1700*, *Intersections* 20 (Leiden: 2012) 283.

⁴ On *Entbildung* and its place in mystical literature of the sixteenth century, see Guiderdoni Bruslé A., “Discours mystique et ‘désimagination’ (*Entbildung*) au début du dix-septième siècle”, in Vaeck M. van – Brems H. – Claassens G.H.M. (eds.), *De Steen van Alciato. Literatuur en visuele cultuur in de Nederlanden. Opstellen voor prof. dr. Karel Porteman bij zijn emeritatie / The Stone of Alciato. Literature and Visual Culture in the Low Countries. Essays in Honour of Karel Porteman* (Leuven: 2003) 961–978.

⁵ For an introduction to iconotexts and intermediality, see Wagner P., “Introduction: Ekphrasis, Iconotexts, and Intermediality – the State(s) of the Art(s)”, in Wagner P. (ed.),

also problematic text for this approach: rich in that they have been illustrated in more than one mode, but problematic in that they assert general concepts rather than tell stories, and thus the term 'illustration' must be applied not as it is normally used with regard to narratives, but in the sense of casting light on the text, interpreting it, and thus offering a visual exegesis. There is inevitably some overlap with the medieval doctrine of the four senses of Scripture: literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical (to which one might add terms used by other commentators, such as Cornelius a Lapide's 'mystical' ['mystice'] and 'symbolic' ['symbolice'], for example).⁶ The modes of visual illustration that I am attempting to outline here are not necessarily correlated closely with, or derive directly from, such categories of scriptural analysis, but they can likewise qualify as 'modes of expounding on sacred Scripture' ('modi exponendi sacram Scripturam'),⁷ and this lack of coordination with the 'four senses' itself suggests the independent value of visual images as exegetical instruments.

Narrative Mode

There is no narrative mode as such for the Beatitudes, which are propositions or *sententiae* without narratives, although there are illustrations of the Sermon on the Mount, such as Maarten de Vos's composition engraved by Jacques de Bie and published by Adriaen Collaert in a series of the *Vita, Passio, et Resurrectio Iesu Christi* [Fig. 1].⁸ The inscription quotes the

Icons – Texts – Iconotexts. Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality (Berlin – New York: 1996) 1–40; Horstkotte S. – Leonhard K., "Einleitung. 'Lesen ist wie Sehen' – über Möglichkeiten und Grenzen intermedialer Wahrnehmung", in Horstkotte S. – Leonhard K. (eds.), *Lesen ist wie Sehen. Intermediale Zitate in Bild und Text* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienna: 2006) 1–15.

⁶ Lapide Cornelius a., *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram*, 21 vols. (Paris: 1859–1862), *passim*. Consider also the four modes of seeing described by Richard of St Victor in his commentary on the Apocalypse, analyzed (and brought into relation to both modes of representation and the four levels of scriptural exegesis) by Caviness M.H., "Images of Divine Order and the Third Mode of Seeing", *Gesta* 22 (1983) 115–116.

⁷ Lubac H. de, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. M. Sebanc and E.M. Macierowski, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI – Edinburgh: 1998/2000) I 13.

⁸ Schuckman C., *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700. Volume XLVI: Maarten de Vos*, ed. D. de Hoop Scheffer (Rotterdam: 1996) 78, no. 299. The composition echoes that of Lieven de Witte's woodcut for Willem van Branteghem's *Dat Leven ons Heeren*, published by Mattheus Crom in 1537, which was reused in biblical publications in several languages by Crom and other publishers, such as the 1538 Liesvelt Bible and the 1538 Crom New Testament; it was reversed for use in the Henrick Peetersen van Middelburch Bible of 1541. See Veldman I. – Schaik K. van, *Verbeelde boodschap. Hout-smeden uit 1537* (Haarlem – Brussels: 1989) 64, no. 34.



Fig. 1. Jacques de Bie after Maarten de Vos, *The Sermon on the Mount*, from the *Vita, Passio, et Resurrectio Iesu Christi* (ca. 1598). Engraving, 180 × 220 mm. London, The British Museum.

opening verses of Matthew 5, describing Christ's escape from the crowd (not pictured), and his teaching of the disciples. He sits on a hillock, surrounded by his disciples, gesturing with both hands as he speaks to them. His right hand, with two fingers erect, is held aloft, perhaps demonstrating and expounding on the utility of a gesture that he uses in the background to heal a sick or lame man, a gesture he uses elsewhere in this series for exorcising and blessing, as well as healing. This background scene may offer a Christological narrative as an exemplum of a Beatitude, but it remains vague. For precise narrative illustrations of the Beatitudes themselves, rather than of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, we must turn to an exemplificatory mode, in which each Beatitude is manifested in a story drawn from Scripture.

Exemplificatory Mode

Harmen Jansz. Muller's series of engravings after Maarten van Heemskerck from around 1566 adduces both Old and New Testament stories as exempla of the Beatitudes.⁹ (For the exempla used, see the Appendix.) The plates are numbered in Vulgate order, suggesting a Catholic or ecumenical audience.¹⁰ Each engraving is inscribed with the relevant Beatitude, either on a fictive stone within the picture space or on a stony rectangle pressed against the picture plane at the lower margin. Each is also subscribed with paraphrastic lines by Hadrianus Junius that refer to the narrative subject, but do not identify the biblical passage. It is reasonable to assume that Junius or Van Heemskerck, who collaborated frequently,¹¹ chose these particular subjects – at least until an earlier instance is discovered. Curiously, perhaps, exegesis of the Beatitudes from Early Christianity to the early modern period offers very few narrative exempla, and those few are neither elaborated beyond a mere reference nor consistently applied.¹²

⁹ Filedt Kok J.P., *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700. Volume XV: The Muller Dynasty I – Jan Ewoutsz. / Harmen Jansz. Muller*, eds. G. Luijten – C. Schuckman, (Rotterdam: 1999) 122–129, nos. 37–44.

¹⁰ A second state of plate 2 (*Blessed Are the Meek*) replaces depictions of God the Father in the clouds at upper right and in the tent at right with tetragrammatons, suggesting that the series was only belatedly aimed at an iconophobic Protestant audience.

¹¹ See Veldman I., "Maarten van Heemskerck and Hadrianus Junius: The Relationship between a Painter and a Humanist", *Simiolus* 7 (1974) 35–54. In his *Batavia* (published posthumously in 1588), Junius praised Van Heemskerck as 'so diverse in his selection of subjects, second to no one in the keenness of his invention' (ibidem 37).

¹² See, for example, Augustine of Hippo, "De sermone Domini in monte", in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*, ed. P.-J. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris: 1865) XXXIV, cols. 1229–1237; Aquinas Thomas, *Catena Aurea. Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers*, trans. M. Pattison, 4 vols. (London: 1841–1845; rpt. ed. Boonville, NY: 2009) I 145–60; *Biblia Sacra, cum glossa ordinaria, primvm qvidem a Strabo Fvldensi monacho benedictino collecta, Nunc verò nouis Patrum cum Graecorum, tum Latinorum explicationibus locupletata, et Postilla Nicolai Lirani Franciscani, necnon additionibus Pavli Byrgensis Episcopi, & Matthae Thoringi replicis, Opera et stvdio Theologorum Dyacensivm*, 6 vols. (Antwerp, Apud Ioannem Keerbergium: 1617) V, cols. 91–100; Calvin John, *Sermons on the Beatitudes: Five Sermons from the Gospel Harmony, Delivered in Geneva in 1560*, trans. R. White (Carlisle, PA: 2006); Lapidé, *Commentaria* XV 135–152; cf. N[iclaes] H[endrik], *The First Exhortation of H. N. to His Children, and To the Family of Love. By Him Newly Perused, and More Distinctly Declared. Likewise H. N. upon the Beatitudes, and the Seven Deadly Sins* (London, Giles Calvert and John Allen: 1656) 181–223, although the many marginal Scripture references may include narrative exempla. The handful of instances in Luther's exposition on the Sermon on the Mount are more counter-exempla than exempla and in no way are sources for the visual works under consideration here; see Luther M., *Luther's Works, Vol. 21, The Sermon on the Mount (Sermons) and the Magnificat*, ed. J. Pelikan (Saint Louis: 1956) 3–50.

Although the subjects chosen to illustrate the Beatitudes in this series derive in equal portions from the Old Testament and the New Testament, much of what Ilja Veldman has written about Old Testament exempla illustrating the Ten Commandments is applicable here, namely, that such stories were used to offer guides to moral conduct, in keeping with the tropological exegesis of the Bible.¹³ The narratives are doubly exemplifying: they are examples *of* the Beatitudes and examples *for* the conduct of the viewer. Junius uses the term explicitly in his verses for the final Beatitude ('Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'), in the illustration for which Stephen dies in a shower of stones by way of example ('Exemplo est Stephanus, leto quem saxeus imber, Obtulit') [Fig. 2].

All the Beatitudes as a group – not only those with specific reference to seeing God or inheriting the kingdom of heaven – were sometimes given an eschatological interpretation, but Van Heemskerck emphasizes the ethical over the eschatological.¹⁴ With the slight exception of the *Stoning of Saint Stephen*, which shows God the Father and Christ at the upper left in heaven, the imagery in this series is emphatically terrestrial. The other narratives as illustrated either give no indication of the beneficial result of the protagonists' abjectness or proof of their blessedness – as in the suffering of Job, poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven is supposed to belong [Fig. 3] – or that result and that proof are implicitly realized in the here and now: thus Simeon who hungers and thirsts for righteousness sees Christ before he dies.

Hendrick Goltzius's *Eight Beatitudes* (*Octo Beatitudines*) of around 1578 [Fig. 4] deploys the same exempla that are in the Muller/Van Heemskerck/Junius series, with a similar emphasis on earthly existence, but he arranges them differently. The print is composed in the same format used by the

¹³ Veldman I., "The Old Testament as a Moral Code: Old Testament Stories as Exempla of the Ten Commandments", *Simiolus* 23 (1995) 215–239; in fact, Harmen Jansz. Muller also engraved a series of the Commandments after Maarten van Heemskerck in 1566 – that is, contemporaneously with their Beatitudes series (ibidem 231–232; Filedt Kok, *The Muller Dynasty* 91–98 [nos. 9–18]). The Ten Commandments engravings are subscribed by the biblical texts rather than verses by Junius. Veldman extends her consideration of Old Testament stories as moral exempla to other subjects and works, including the Van Heemskerck/Muller *Beatitudes* (Veldman, "The Old Testament" 238).

¹⁴ On ethics vs. eschatology in the Matthean text, see Guelich, R.A., "The Matthean Beatitudes: 'Entrance-Requirements' or Eschatological Blessings", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976) 427–431.



Fig. 2. Harmen Jansz. Muller after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Stoning of Saint Stephen (Blessed Are the Persecuted)* (ca. 1566). Engraving, 212 × 248 mm. London, The British Museum.

young artist for other prints executed for, or under the aegis of, the print-maker and publisher Philips Galle in Haarlem, consisting of a central image framed by vignettes illustrating Bible passages.¹⁵ It is relatively common in prints of the period, and although it may be, in part, a holdover from the arrangement of painted polyptychs, it exploits the particular relationship of a print to a viewer: held in the viewer's hands and available for comfortable study at length, like a book, a print fruitfully accommodates multiple and diverse visual and verbal elements, which are available to engage in mutual interplay.

¹⁵ Leesberg M., *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700: Hendrick Goltzius, Part I*, ed. H. Leeftang (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: 2012) 104–143, nos. 51–68.



Fig. 3. Harmen Jansz. Muller after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Job Receiving the Ill News of His Misfortunes (Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit)* (ca. 1566). Engraving, 213 × 248 mm. London, The British Museum.

Here the main scene, illustrating *Matthew* 5:1–2, is of Christ preaching to a crowd gathered around him – that is, the simple narrative of the Sermon on the Mount [cf. Fig. 1]. The subsidiary scenes illustrate the Beatitudes and are supplemented by images of the four Evangelists at the corners. The central scene establishes the context and authority of the rest of the print, much as does the beginning of *Matthew* 5 itself. The Evangelists extrapolate that authority, transferring it from Christ to Gospel, the transmitted Word of God. Goltzius depicts a tri-partite discourse: an act of direct discourse, the literal content of that discourse, and the associated exemplifying narratives of that discourse (as image-text-image). The image of Christ's preaching thus generates the vignettes of the Beatitudes with their subscribed scriptural texts (as well as the Evangelist portraits), and there is a radiating outward of both the reading and the meaning of the work – a centrifugal movement.



Fig. 4. Hendrick Goltzius, *The Eight Beatitudes* (ca. 1578). Engraving, 255 × 185 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

The inscriptions reproduce the text of the Beatitudes, but the narrative subjects are not identified as they were in the Van Heemskerck series, and the viewer would be presumed to recognize them. The eight Beatitudes begin at the upper left and proceed counter-clockwise, again in Vulgate order. They are thus brought full circle, from one reward of the kingdom of heaven to the other (appropriate for their position at the top of the print), recalling Augustine's reading of the last Beatitude as a return to the first.¹⁶ The theme of persecution announced in the eighth Beatitude is continued in the following verse (*Matthew* 5:11), when Christ shifts to a second-person address. It informs Goltzius's entire print, appearing as the larger inscription at the bottom: 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven'.

This happy result is illustrated in the central image of a similar print, datable to around 1575–1580, attributed to Hans I Collaert after Jan Snelinck [Fig. 5], which is part of a series of four engravings, along with *The Acts of Mercy*, *Man's Choice between Good and Evil*, and *The Seven Vices*.¹⁷ The same narratives are again chosen to illustrate the Beatitudes and are again without further identification.¹⁸ The vignettes are in a peculiar zig-zagging order, beginning at the lower left, which was probably designed to place the two Marian subjects at the top.¹⁹

¹⁶ Augustine, "De sermone Domini in monte", col. 1234; noted by Lapidé, *Commentaria* XV 150–151.

¹⁷ The format is very similar in another set of four engravings, also probably by Snelinck and Collaert: *The Creed*, *The Ten Commandments*, *The Seven Sacraments*, and *The Lord's Prayer*; see Diehls A. – Leesberg M., *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700: The Collaert Dynasty, Part 2*, eds. M. Leesberg – A. Balis (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: 2005) 215–226, nos. 431–438. These prints were attributed to Hans Collaert I after Jan Snelinck (with Eduard Hoeswinckel as the probable publisher) by Mielke H., "Antwerpener Graphik in der 2. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts: Der Thesaurus veteris et novi Testamenti des Gerard de Jode (1585) und seine Künstler", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1975) 35, note 12.

¹⁸ The Tobit scene [no. 5] may have been particularly difficult to identify; it is here limited to feeding the hungry. Goltzius's print also includes burying the dead in the Tobit scene (only Van Heemskerck depicted clothing the naked), which suggests a chronological priority over the Snellinck composition. It is worth noting that Snellinck also followed Van Heemskerck's iconography in his print of the *Ten Commandments* (see Veldman, "The Ten Commandments" 232).

¹⁹ All eight of the Beatitudes were associated with the Virgin Mary in a pictorial cycle by Eustache Le Seuer of ca. 1650 for the private chapel of the *hôtel* of Charles Brissonnet, of which only a few paintings are extant; see Vasseur D., "Mansuétude by Eustache Le Seuer", *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 71 (1977) 8–11.



Fig. 5. Hans Collaert I after Jan Snellinck, *The Eight Beatitudes with the Holy Trinity* (ca. 1575–1580). Engraving, 259 × 192 mm. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel: Graph. Res. D: 78.18.

The central scene of resurrection and paradise – the uplifting half of the Last Judgment – is complemented by the scriptural passages quoted in the lower inscription (neither of which is identified): 1 *Corinthians* 3:8 b: ‘And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour’ (‘unusquisque autem propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum laborem’); and *Galatians* 6:8a: ‘For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap’ (‘quae enim seminaverit homo haec et metet’). These passages and the central scene reinforce the eschatological meanings of the Beatitudes that have been stressed by many exegetes: the blessedness promised by the Beatitudes is realized only in heaven. Changing the central image from the Sermon on the Mount (Goltzius) to Paradise (Snellinck) shifts the reading of the Beatitudes from the ethical to the eschatological.

Whereas Goltzius’s print exhibits centrifugal movement, here the movement is centripetal, a movement inward, with enframing texts and images leading to a central scene rather than being generated by it. These forces are only broadly formal; that is, the movements between the parts rely more on iconographic than visual relations. And such a structure is in itself not dependent on the use of visual images: these works function, both visually and conceptually, like the *Glossa ordinaria* [Fig. 6]. A central text, inferrable as primary, whether by position or size, is surrounded by other texts (and, in the case of the *Glossa*, interlineated as well), and subscribed by further texts. All these marginal texts gloss the central text. In the case of the Snellinck engraving there are eighteen glossing texts, discounting the angels at the top and the grotesques at the bottom, which have their own rôle to play; that is, two discrete texts (one verbal and one visual) for each of the eight Beatitudes, plus the two Pauline texts below the central image.

Non-linear viewing, which is typical for visual images, is exaggerated in the Goltzius and Snellinck compositions by the multiplicity of subsidiary compositions and texts within the same visual field. The images may suggest an order for viewing the various elements, through size, position, and so on, but they do not dictate it. (The same non-linear effect can be achieved solely with text, as the *Glossa ordinaria* demonstrates.) At work is thus not only or even primarily the images’ effect on the viewer, but also, and more important, the viewer’s activity – his or her contemplation, rumination, exploration, visual and mental analysis, pushing and pulling – in a dynamic relationship with the images.²⁰

²⁰ Such ‘complex, poly-centric images’, with their ‘discontinuity of reading and articulation’, have been referred to as ‘map-texts’ by Catellani A., “Before the Preludes: Some

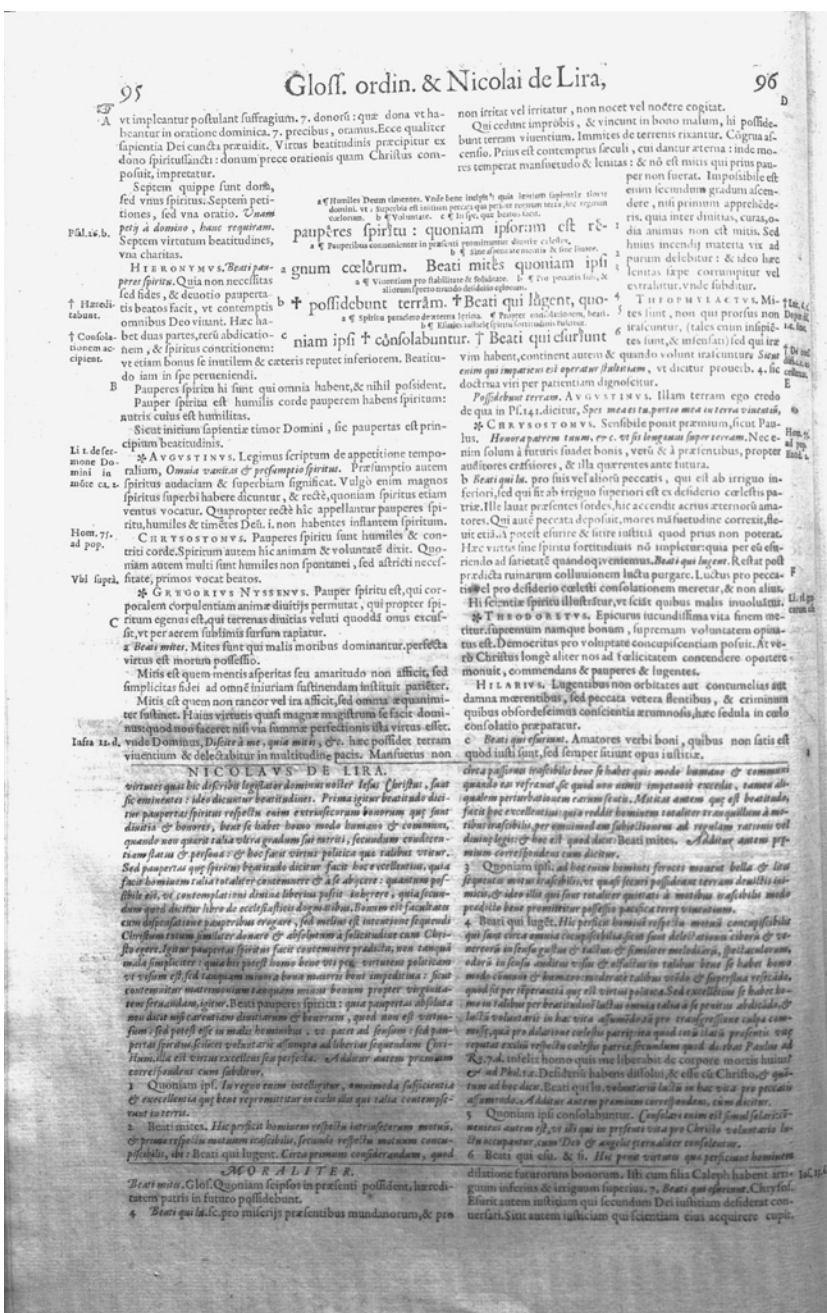


Fig. 6. *Biblia Sacra, cum Glossa ordinaria*... (Antwerp, Apud Ioannem Keerbergium: 1617) vol. 5, cols. 95–96. Leuven, Maurits Sabbesbibliotheek.

Figurative (Emblematic) Mode

The narrative prologue of the preaching Christ was employed again in 1601, but this time as part of a catechetical emblem consisting of motto, *pictura*, and *subscriptio* – one of a hundred such emblems by Theodoor Galle in the Jesuit Jan David's *Veridicus Christianus*, which was published by the Plantin press in Antwerp [Fig. 7].²¹ In the text keyed to the image, David treats the Beatitudes generally rather than individually. He asks how the greatest blessedness can be found in poverty, degradation, sorrow, and persecution – represented by the abject figure at the bottom of the image – a blessedness attainable only after death. The biblical text of the Beatitudes is indicated in a banderole just below Christ – 'Beati pauperes spiritu. Et c[etera]' – and the glossing distichs of the *subscriptio*, structured in the question-and-answer format of the catechism, offer three quite different definitions of the Beatitudes. The Latin calls them the 'eight prophetic signs of the blessed life' and the tokens by which God grants access to the heavenly heights. The Dutch says that they are called the 'good eight Beatitudes' ('die goed' acht Salicheden) because through them one comes to glorious peace. In the French, they are the path along which the soul is conducted to the marriage bed of the celestial spouse.²² Eight figures, who are, with a few exceptions, indistinguishable from each other, are making their way up the paths toward the gates to the heavenly heights, occupied by God the Father and a host of angels. In the commentary, David calls the Beatitudes the eight conditions necessary to be

Semiotic Observations on Vision, Meditation, and the 'Fifth Space' in Early Jesuit Spiritual Illustrated Literature", in Melion W.S. – Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni-Bruslé A. (eds.), *Ut Pictura Meditatio: The Meditative Image in Northern Art, 1500–1700* (Turnhout: 2012) 186.

²¹ David Jan, *Veridicus Christianus* (Antwerp, Ex officina Plantiniana: 1601) 142–43 and pl. 44 (Cap. XLIV). On the *Veridicus*, see Lieb L., "Emblematische Experimente. Formen und Funktionen der frühen Jesuiten-Emblematik am Beispiel der Emblembücher Jan Davids", in Manning J. – Vaecq M. van (eds.), *The Jesuits and the Emblem Tradition: Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18–23 August, 1996* (Turnhout: 1999) 307–321; Dekoninck R., *Ad imaginem: Status, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVII^e siècle* (Geneva: 2005) 286–296; Waterschoot W., "Veridicus Christianus and Christelicken Waerseggher by Joannes David", in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni-Bruslé A. (eds.), *Emblemata Sacra: Rhétorique et herméneutique du discours sacré dans la littérature en images / The Rhetoric and Hermeneutics of Illustrated Sacred Discourse* (Turnhout: 2007) 527–534.

²² David Jan, *Veridicus*, pl. 44: 'Quid signa octo volunt Vitae praesaga beatae? Tessera sunt, quibus aethereas Deus annuit arces. Waerom syn soo ghenoeft, die goed' acht Salicheden? Om datmen door die coemt, ter glorieuser vreden. Des saintes estudes, Des beatitudes, Qu'en aprennons nous? Le chemin qui l'Ame, Conduit au thalame, Du Celeste espoux'.



Fig. 7. Theodoor Galle, *The Eight Beatitudes*, plate 44 to Jan David, *Veridicus Christianus* (Antwerp, ex officina Plantiniana: 1601). Engraving. Leuven, Maurits Sabbibliotheek.

blessed, and his eschatological reading of all eight is clear: they are the certain routes to eternal blessedness ('per illas, vt certas quasdam vias, ad aeternam beatitudinem peruenturos'). Drawing on a rather obscure simile in *Isaiah* 16:2 ('Simile ab auibus è nido delapsis', according to the marginal note), which he fully describes, David concludes that we are driven away from Paradise through our own fault, like young birds falling from the nest into the dangers of the world. However, just as a mother bird sings to her chicks to call them back, branch by branch, to safety, so too Christ rescues us by calling us in the song of the Beatitudes.²³ All this is represented by the tree, birds, and scary serpents on the ground at left.

As David notes to the reader, he wrote the *Veridicus* in Dutch and then translated (and occasionally paraphrased) it into Latin, for which edition the plates were conceived and executed, enriching and complicating a straightforward catechetical text. (The Dutch version was published subsequently, in 1602.) The plates of the *Veridicus* were printed (and priced) separately from the commentary (and their versos are consequently blank); they were usually interleaved with the text quires, but examples of both text alone and plates alone exist, suggesting different audiences for the work.²⁴ In his dedicatory epistle to Peter Simons, the bishop of Ypres, David explained that the literate can see the same thing in images (literally what is 'almost tossed up under their eyes') as they read in the text, whereas the ignorant could at least 'read' it by looking closely at the images.²⁵ But David is simply repeating a truism of the *liber idiotarum* whose full applicability in this case is highly doubtful, since some of the visual imagery, such as the tree and birds in the Beatitudes chapter, could not be easily comprehended without verbal explanation – by either the unlettered or the lettered – thus acting as a challenge rather than an aid to understanding. As Ludger Lieb has argued, when the *Veridicus* is approached from text to image, the images play a strictly mnemonic (*memoriale*) function, reinforcing the lessons of the catechetical text (and they do not, therefore, act as emblems), but when the work is approached

²³ David, *Veridicus* 142–143.

²⁴ Waterschoot, "*Veridicus*" 534. Philips Galle issued the plates, each now supplied with an ornamental border and the suite with a title-page, as *Icones ad veridicum christianum* (Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem* 288).

²⁵ David, *Veridicus* fol. †2r: 'Ea ipsa deinde scholiis quibusdam, atque adeo cenum in aes incisus iconibus illustrare visum est; vt, qui lecta intelligerent, eadem quasi subiecta oculis viderent: & rudiores, quae alias non possent, ipso saltem intuitu legerent'. See Lieb, "Emblematische Experimente" 309; Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem* 289; Waterschoot, "*Veridicus*" 528.

from image to text, the images become puzzling and emblematic and play an intellectual (*intellectuelle*) function.²⁶ The book's three indices – of things ('index rerum veridici christiani'), examples ('index exemplorum veridici'), and similes ('index similium veridici') – which point to the text rather than the plates, offer further approaches to the material. The passage from *Isaiah* 16, for example, is marked in two entries in the index of similes, likening Christ's doctrine to the bird's song ('Christi doctrina, cantui aui') and the fallen man to the chick fallen from the nest ('Homo lapsus, pullo è nido lapso'). Like the text, the index entries resolve in themselves or obviate the enigmas of the plates.²⁷

The figurative or emblematic mode takes a more hieroglyphic form in Antoon Wierix's series of small, delicate engravings of the Beatitudes, which are unsupported by extended explanatory text like that of David's catechetical work.²⁸ Each of Wierix's emblems consists of the biblical text of the Beatitude inscribed at the bottom of the image, an animal or heart occupying the central area, and a banderole with a related text toward the top that explicates, reinforces, or paraphrases the scriptural passage. Each of these texts is taken from Augustine's homily on Christ's Sermon on the Mount, which was well known throughout the Middle Ages and early modern period, quoted by Thomas Aquinas and other theologians, and even excerpted in the Roman breviary.²⁹

Some of the emblems use more common imagery than others. The fifth plate, for example, *Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Will Receive Mercy*, shows a self-sacrificing pelican [Fig. 8]. To each side of the pelican are lilies, which are here related to the mercy that Christ shows to the saved at the Last Judgment, where he is sometimes flanked by a lily and a sword.³⁰ The lily appears again in the following emblem, *Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for They Will See God* [Fig. 9], but this time superimposed on a heart as a symbol of purity, as it was often used in association with the

²⁶ Lieb, "Emblematische Experimente" 309–310; see also Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem* 293–295, who notes that the Jesuit 'programme pédagogique', while allowing for curiosity in 'une perspective proprement ludique', nonetheless 'exclut tout obscurité impénétrable'.

²⁷ Fine distinctions are not drawn among the three types of index; thus, the 'Aues è nido delapsae, homo lapsus è Paradisus' of the *index rerum* scarcely differs from the 'Homo lapsus, pullo è nido lapso' of the *index similium veridici*. The Beatitudes chapter is not referred to in the *index exemplorum veridici*.

²⁸ Ruyven-Zeman Z van – Leesberg M., *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700. Volume LXVI: The Wierix Family, Part 8*, eds. J. van der Stock – M. Leesberg, (Rotterdam: 2004) 178–181, nos. 156–163.

²⁹ Augustine, "De sermone", cols. 1229–1237.

³⁰ The inscription on the banderole proclaims: 'The merciful succor so that the wretched may be freed' ('Misericordes subueniunt vt miseri liberentur').



Fig. 8. Antoon II Wierix, *Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Will Receive Mercy*, from *The Eight Beatitudes* (before 1604). Engraving, 65 × 49 mm. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique.



Fig. 9. Antoon II Wierix, *Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for They Will See God*, from *The Eight Beatitudes* (before 1604). Engraving, 66 × 49 mm. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique.

Virgin Mary, thus corresponding to the Beatitudes series beginning with Van Heemskerck that had used the Annunciation to exemplify the pure in heart. In his brief comment on this Beatitude, Augustine emphasizes its predicate, the seeing of God, but Wierix does not anthropomorphize the heart with eyes here, as in *Blessed Are Those Who Mourn, for They Will Be Comforted* [Fig. 10], in which the mournful act of crying (rather than an act of seeing) is illustrated.³¹ The pure but eyeless heart that sees God is perfectly in keeping with Augustine's tendency to spiritualize the Beatitudes, in contrast to the moralizing exegesis of some commentators and illustrators. 'How foolish', Augustine writes, 'are those who seek God with these outward eyes, since He is seen with the heart!'³² Augustine adduced this Beatitude also in *De trinitate*, in which he asserts the necessity of faith in cleansing the heart and seeing God.³³ With regard to Wierix's prints, this human contribution to the soul's encounter with God has its counterpart in the effort required by the votary to work through the enigmas – to see through the dark glass – of the emblems.³⁴

Augustine's spiritualization and personalization of the Beatitudes also make the emblematic mode more apt than the exemplificatory mode for an Augustinian rendering of the subject. Augustine completely internalizes the actions of the peacemakers, for example, viewing them not as quasi-political agents brokering a peace between conflicting parties, but as those who have brought 'in order all the motions of their soul, [...] subjecting them to reason – i.e., to the mind and spirit – and by having their carnal lusts thoroughly subdued, become a kingdom of God'.³⁵ Wierix's use of a symbol rather than a narrative – the peacemaker as a dove rather than a supplicant Abigail, as in the exemplificatory prints – allows more readily for such an interpretation without excluding others [Fig. 11; contrast Figs. 4–5].

³¹ The Augustinian inscription reads: 'They mourn like those knowing what they have lost and to what depths they have sunk' ('Lugent enim tanquam scientes quid amiserint, et quibus mersi sint').

³² Augustine, "De sermone", col. 1232: 'Quam ergo stulti sunt qui Deum istis exterioribus oculis quaerunt, cum corde videatur'; see Augustine of Hippo, "Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount", trans. W. Findlay, in Schaff P. (ed.), *Saint Augustin: Sermon on the Mount. Harmony of the Gospels. Homilies on the Gospels*, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 6 (New York: 1888) 5.

³³ See Miles M., "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's *De trinitate* and *Confessions*", *The Journal of Religion* 63 (1983) 130–131. See also Teske, R.J., "St. Augustine and the Vision of God", in Van Fleteren F. – Schnaubelt J.C. – Reino J. (eds.), *Augustine. Mystic and Mystagogue* (New York: 1994) 287–308, esp. 297.

³⁴ For Augustine and 'per speculum in aenigmate', see Miles, "Vision" 140–141.

³⁵ Cf. Lapide, *Commentaria* XV 148–149.



Fig. 10. Antoon II Wierix, *Blessed Are Those Who Mourn, for They Will Be Comforted*, from *The Eight Beatitudes* (before 1604). Engraving, 64 × 49 mm. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique.



Fig. 11. Antoon II Wierix, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers, for They Shall Be Called the Children of God*, from *The Eight Beatitudes* (before 1604). Engraving, 65 × 50 mm. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique.

Verbal Mode

The mode that is both the most literal and (consequently) the most abstract, which I am calling the verbal mode, is, to my knowledge, represented not by any prints of the Beatitudes,³⁶ but by so-called text paintings in Reformed churches in the Netherlands.³⁷ Among the many text-paintings in St. Bavo's, Haarlem, the text of the Beatitudes, in non-Vulgate order, is presented on a panel dating to around 1580–1585. Appended to the Beatitudes are the finger-wagging Woes from Luke, which may have been especially appealing to Calvinists [Fig. 12].³⁸ A comparable painting of the Beatitudes (along with a prayer), dating from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, is in the Great or St Lawrence's Church of Weesp, where it replaced sculptures on the choir screen [Fig. 13].³⁹

These paintings self-evidently present or represent (the terminology becomes problematic) the Beatitudes, but in a strikingly different way than the figural images considered here. In fact, one might say that they posit the undesirability or even the impossibility of representation at all, insofar as such paintings are founded on negation – the negation of the visual. A perceptual experience that we associate with early modern painting has been replaced by a linguistic experience – the acme of an 'ascending spiral of abstraction'.⁴⁰ In privileging language over material concreteness, they both manifest and provoke a perceptual withdrawal and an aesthetic withdrawal. The form of presentation is putatively unimportant, a mere vehicle for the idea, so that the object is a specific realization in material form of a general proposition. The paintings are tautologies: they are what they represent (namely, the Beatitudes) – or

³⁶ Prints of the Ten Commandments in the verbal mode are, however, common – explicable, at least in part, by their appearance in the biblical source as written text (on the tablets) rather than oral discourse.

³⁷ On these text paintings, see Mochizuki M., *The Netherlandish Image after Iconoclasm, 1566–1672: Material Religion in the Dutch Golden Age* (Aldershot: 2008).

³⁸ This painting is specifically paired with a painting of passages from 1 John 1, 3, and 4.

³⁹ I am grateful to Mia Mochizuki for providing the photographs of the text paintings in Haarlem and Weesp.

⁴⁰ Kotz L., *Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge, MA – London: 2007) 184.



Fig. 12. Unknown painter, *Beatitudes (Matthew 5 and Luke 6)* (ca. 1580–85), Haarlem, Great or St Bavo Church. Photograph by Tjeerd Frederikse.

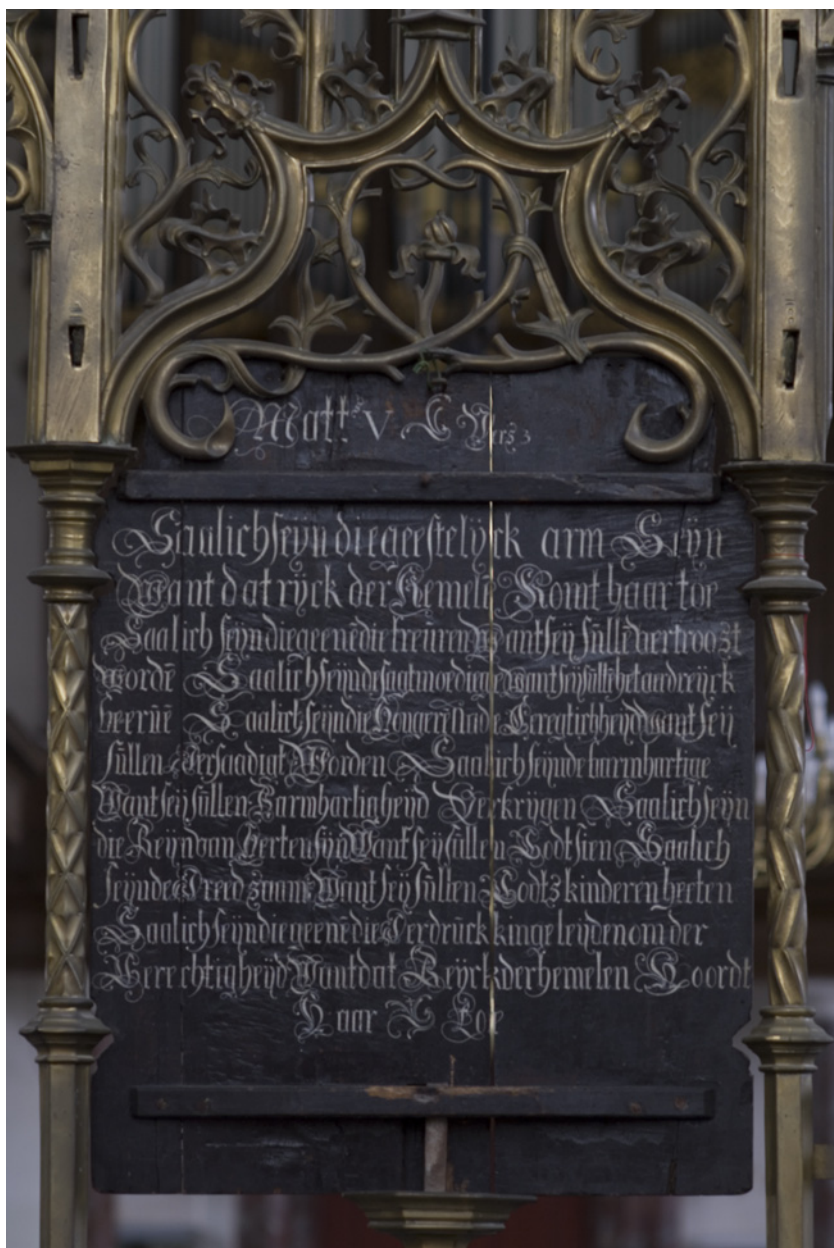


Fig. 13. Anonymous, *Beatitudes* and *Prayer* (late 16th–early 17th century, on a choir screen of ca. 1530). Weesp, Great or St Lawrence's Church. Photograph by Tjeerd Frederikse.

what they pretend to represent, or what we expect them to represent. In that sense, they are self-referential. They have become literal representations, literally literal, as it were: 'a privileging of the literal over the referential axis of (visual) language'.⁴¹ I suggest that the intent 'was to replace the object of spatial and perceptual experience by linguistic definition alone',⁴² and such works 'thus constituted the most consequential assault on the status of that object: its visibility, its commodity status, and its form of distribution'.⁴³ I have borrowed these terms and quotations not from writings on early modern painting, but from the language of Conceptual Art and related movements: specifically from Benjamin Buchloh, Robert Morris, Joseph Kosuth, and Liz Kotz.⁴⁴ They could be applied to, *inter alia multa*, Kosuth's works from the mid- to late 1960s, such as the *One and Three Chairs*, in which 'chair' is signified simultaneously by a physical object, a photograph of that object, and a definition of that object; and his *Art as Idea as Idea* photostats (he attempted to avoid the traditional iconicity of painting with this medium), which reproduce definitions (in the most self-referential case: a definition of 'definition').⁴⁵

Whether or not one accepts a comparison with Conceptual Art – and I note also that both the works of the late sixteenth century and of the mid-1960s involve an institutional critique – the Beatitudes paintings surely posit a radical re-assessment of the very concept of representation. Of course, there are important differences here, not least of which is that the paintings of the Beatitudes are not utterly tautological: they cling more tenaciously to some form of external referentiality, since the text is pre-existent and sacred and must always refer to the instance (or instances) of Jesus's uttering it.

So what exactly do the Beatitudes paintings represent? The brief of the religious artist had been to make the invisible visible, which may still hold here, but only with a highly attenuated notion of visibility. These paintings seem no longer to represent something but rather simply to *re-present* it – to present it again, reproduce it, reiterate it. Representation as we understand it cannot account for a work in which the signifier is co-extensive with the signified, and the term 'illustration' becomes moot

⁴¹ Buchloh B., "Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions", *October* 55 (1990) 125.

⁴² *Ibidem* 107.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ See also Kotz, *Words to Be Looked at* 188, 193, 194.

⁴⁵ On the *One and Three Chairs*, see *ibidem* 182–184.

as well in that there is no casting of light from an external source – that is, the work – onto a discrete text (whether we mean by that the concept of the Beatitudes or Jesus's verbalizations of them). It is reminiscent of a hypothetical 1:1-scale map that covers exactly the land it represents and also shows every object in the land, proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce, Jorge Luis Borges, and others.⁴⁶ Such a map would duplicate, uselessly, its representational object – 'would be', in Peirce's words, 'an image of nothing but itself'⁴⁷ – and thus may operate as a metaphor for the failure of representation itself.

Framing

In any case, the Reformed paintings' negation of representation, their bid for utter transparency, cannot succeed because they exist as objects and even carry with them vestiges of traditional devotional representations. As a sacred text, the Bible, even in the infinite reproducibility of its printed form, has some aura, but that aura is enhanced by excerpting a portion of the text and presenting it in a skillfully made object. At first glance, the paintings might seem to pretend to the neutrality and infinite reproducibility of type-set text, but they are, in fact, hand-made objects, executed with the same care and skill that had characterized calligraphic inscriptions on prints and in model-books in the Netherlands for some time.

Furthermore, enframing acknowledges an object's status as representation,⁴⁸ as does the facture of an object: in prints this would

⁴⁶ See Almeida I., "Borges and Peirce, on Abduction and Maps", *Semiotica* 140–141 (2002), esp. 23–24. To be sure, the comparison is not exact, and the reproduction of a text does not suffer from the same practical problems so carefully considered by Eco U., "On the Impossibility of Drawing a Map of the Empire on a Scale of 1 to 1", in *How to Travel with a Salmon and Other Essays*, trans. W. Weaver (London: 1995) 84–94.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Almeida, "Borges and Peirce" 24, who notes that such a map 'becomes not only a self-representative (solipsist) representation, but also an infinite representation of itself'.

⁴⁸ See Kemp, W., "The Narrativity of the Frame", in Duro P. (ed.), *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge: 1996) 14: 'Under such conditions of viewing it is inconceivable that the observer might prefer not to see the frame so as to be lost in the picture. The frame is the necessary condition for perception being possible, for any kind of structural perception'. See also Marin L., "The Frame of Representation and Some of its Figures", in Duro P. (ed.), *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*, (Cambridge: 1996) 95–96, who notes the contribution of framework to representation's process of presenting simultaneously itself (reflexivity) and something else (transitivity).

include line, colorlessness, relatively small size, and two-dimensional ciphers that call attention to the surface of the print (such as inscriptions or lettered/numbered keys); in paintings it would include any visible brushwork, the slight relief of the materials, and the physical frame. These are all aspects of 'framework', broadly considered.

The strapwork and vegetal motifs of the St Bavo piece's painted frame (as well as the careful painting of its script) recall calligraphy manuals, such as Clemens Perret's *Exercitatio alphabetica* of 1569 in which the affinities of writing and picturing, of *schrijfconst* and *schilderconst*, are underscored, as Walter Melion has pointed out.⁴⁹ But the enframing of the St Bavo painting also recalls *naturalia* and *groteschi* that frequently appeared in the margins of late medieval illuminated manuscripts, especially of the Ghent-Bruges school of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and that survived the early modern shift from manuscript illumination to printmaking and occasionally, as here, painting. They make frequent appearances in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Netherlandish religious prints and book illustrations, both narrative and iconic – by way of example, I reproduce the *Ecce rex vester* from Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* [Fig. 14]⁵⁰ – and anticipate the paintings of devotional vignettes surrounded by garlands developed by Jan Brueghel the Elder and Rubens for Cardinal Federico Borromeo and others.⁵¹ The marginalia and the garlands may resist precise interpretation, and their significance may vary greatly from one work to another, even within the oeuvre of a single artist. But in many instances, they were available to play a devotional and meditative role in conjunction with the images they border. In general, one may say that the enframing devices, as much as any

⁴⁹ Melion W.S., "Memory and the Kinship of Writing and Picturing in the Early Seventeenth-Century Netherlands", *Word & Image* 8 (1992) 48–70; idem, "Calligraphers and Calligraphy (1550–1650)", in Muller S.D. (ed.), *Dutch Art: An Encyclopedia* (New York and London: 1997) 53–55.

⁵⁰ Natalis, Hieronymus, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur; Cym Evangeliorum concordantia historiae integritati sufficienti. Addessit & Index historiam ipsam Euangelicam in ordinem temporis vitae Christi distribuens* (Antwerp: Martinus Nutius, 1595) 284.

⁵¹ See especially Freedberg D., "The Origins and Rise of the Flemish Madonnas in Flower Garlands: Decoration and Devotion", *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 32, 3rd ser. (1981); and Merriam S., *Seventeenth-Century Flemish Garland Paintings: Still Life, Vision, and the Devotional Image* (Farnham, Surrey: 2012).



Fig. 14. Wierix family workshop, *Ecce rex vester*, in Hieronymus Natalis, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur*, 2nd ed. (Antwerp: Martinus Nutius, 1595) 284. Engraving. U.S.A., private collection.

external frames, present the central images *as images*, implicitly confirming the Tridentine position on religious images.⁵²

This is not to suggest that the authorities at St Bavo subscribed – either wittingly or unwittingly – to Catholic image theory, but the particular enframing of the text of the Beatitudes here inescapably carries with it vestiges of pre-Reformation and Catholic meditative practice. Likewise, the placement of the Weesp paintings on the choir screen evokes the function of the objects they replaced and pretend to negate. In an introduction to Conceptual Art, the British Art & Language group wrote in 1969:

To place an object in a context where the attention of any spectator will be conditioned toward the expectancy of recognizing art objects. For example placing what up to then had been an object of alien visual characteristics to those expected within the framework of an art ambience, or by virtue of the artist declaring the object to be an art object whether or not it was in an art ambience. Using these techniques what appeared to be entirely new morphologies were held out to qualify for the status of the members of the class ‘art objects’.⁵³

If we substitute ‘religious objects’ or even ‘religious art objects’ for ‘art objects’, and ‘religious ambience’ for ‘art ambience’, the statement might well describe the relationship between the Reformed text paintings and both their pre-existing physical context and ongoing devotional context.

The enframing devices on all the works considered in this essay – in fact, on all works *tout court* – participate in the signifying of the works they enframe. Such devices include any context for presentation and apprehension: the frutiferous surround of the St Bavo *Beatitudes*; the interplay among Jesus’s Sermon, the Gospel writers, and the implied textual sources for Goltzius’s *exempla*; the choir screen formerly laden with religious sculptures in Weesp; the very small scale that mandates intimate viewing of the Wierix series; the other prints in the series with the Snelinck/Collaert *Beatitudes* (the *Acts of Mercy*, *Man’s Choice between Good and Evil*, and the *Seven Vices*); flipping the pages between image and text

⁵² This point is stressed by Freedberg, “The Origins”. It is worth noting in this context that the iconic image of Christ in the *Adnotationes* and its surrounding *groteschi* were engraved on separate plates [Fig. 14]. For a more nuanced analysis of framing devices, see the essay by Ralph Dekoninck and Agnès Guiderdoni in this volume. The relation between *ergon* and *parergon* is often very difficult to interpret conclusively; see, for example, Scollen-Jimack C., “Harmony or Discord? Text and Image in Two Editions of the Marot / De Beze Translation of the Psalms”, in Dirscherl K. (ed.), *Bild und Text im Dialog*, Pink 3 (Passau: 1993) 115–127.

⁵³ “Introduction”, *Art & Language* 1 (1969) 5; quoted by Buchloh, “Conceptual Art” 126.

in David's *Veridicus Christianus*; and even the multiple glossings through, around, and below the text of the Beatitudes in the *Glossa ordinaria*. Text and context, image and frame: the components of illustrations within any of these modes – narrative, exemplificatory, figurative, verbal, as well as combinations of them – intersect with endless variety. Sacred though it may be, there is no text of the Beatitudes without its iteration. Every iteration is a representation. And every representation is an interpretation.

Appendix: Narrative Exempla (Van Heemskerck/Muller; Goltzius; Snellinck/Collaert)

Beatitudes (Douay-Rheims/Vulgate)	Narrative Exempla
1. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (' <i>beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:3)	Job receiving the ill news of his misfortunes (<i>Job</i> 1:14–21)
2 [3]. 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land' (' <i>Beati mites quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:4 [5:5])	Miriam and Aaron disputing with Moses about his Ethiopian wife (<i>Numbers</i> 12:1–15)
3 [2]. 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted' (' <i>Beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:5 [5:4])	The woman described as a sinner (traditionally identified as Mary Magdalen) bathing Christ's feet with her tears and drying them with her hair (<i>Luke</i> 7:36–50)
4. 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill' (' <i>Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam quoniam ipsi saturabuntur</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:6)	The Presentation in the Temple (<i>Luke</i> 2:25–38)
5. 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy' (' <i>Beati misericordes quia ipsi misericordiam consequentur</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:7)	Tobit feeding the hungry [Van Heemskerck, Goltzius, and Snellinck], burying the dead [Van Heemskerck and Goltzius only], and clothing the naked [Van Heemskerck only] (<i>Tobit</i> 1:17–21)
6. 'Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God' (' <i>beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:8)	The Annunciation, with the dove of the Holy Spirit hovering over Mary who kneels as she is approached by the angel telling her that she will bear a son, Jesus, who will be called the Son of God (<i>Luke</i> 1:26–39)
7. 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God' (' <i>beati pacifici quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:9)	Abigail, wife of Nabal, who appeases David and defuses the threat of violence with the offer of a feast (1 <i>Samuel</i> 25)
8. 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (' <i>beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum</i> ') (<i>Matthew</i> 5:10)	The stoning of the proto-Apostle, Stephen (<i>Acts</i> 7:58–60)

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FRAMING DEVICES AND EXEGETICAL STRATEGIES IN NORTHERN ILLUSTRATED SPIRITUAL LITERATURE

Ralph Dekoninck and Agnès Guiderdoni

When does the image interpret itself? When does it generate its own exegesis through its own visual resources, independently of any accompanying text? This question deserves to be asked and to be applied to the particular case of religious literature, especially biblical literature, a case in point on the development of exegesis in the early modern period in both Catholic and Protestant cultures. This question is all the more interesting in that it is of particular use in characterizing northern visual culture, which did not produce a real theory of the image, as did Italian Renaissance culture, but rather a theory *in* images. We may in fact speak of literally theoretical images in the sense that they deploy a rich visual exegesis, which sketches a certain conception of the usages and the effects of images. It should thus be understood as the interpretation that the image itself produces, both of itself and of what it offers to the viewer.

As has been shown by studies of Antwerp painting in the first half of the seventeenth century, and in particular studies of painting relating to collectors' cabinets,¹ this discourse on the image by the image essentially works through a play on frames and framing. In transposing the results of these studies to the world of illustrated literature, we would like to examine the visual strategies put in place in order to make illustration a genuine *machina spiritualis*; that is, a machine productive not only of meaning but even more of spiritual experience. Drawing on an exegetical dynamic, these games of framing and 'montage' question simultaneously the status of representation of the scriptural Word as image and of the image as text. In other words, they question the way in which a *figura* can be represented and correctly understood at a time when this notion of figure undergoes some shifts among its various senses. 'Figure' should be understood here in its three-fold complexity: the material image (the plastic figure), the trope (the rhetorical figure), and the biblical figures of traditional patristic exegesis. Now this is precisely the nodal point in the

¹ See Filipczak Z.Z., *Picturing Art in Antwerp 1550–1700* (Princeton: 1987); Stoichita V., *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting* (Cambridge: 1996).

development of biblical exegesis at the beginning of the modern period, as well as a double apple of discord between Catholics and Protestants. Initiated by humanists like Erasmus or Lefèvre d'Étaples, biblical exegesis follows a radical transformation in the sixteenth century, gradually dividing Catholics and Protestants, a transformation in which literal and allegorical meanings of the sacred text are redefined, and the status of rhetorical figures such as images and metaphors is questioned. As a consequence, the engraved representation of figurative passages of the Bible and their allegorical meaning presents some key hermeneutical issues.

So as to reduce the danger of misinterpretation on the part of one readership or the other, framing devices help construe and organize meaningful elements into a visual montage, thereby plotting a hermeneutic and mnemotechnic discursive path. This *ars combinatoria*, to employ a much-used phrase from the field of the *ars memoriae*, is in effect made possible only by a structure or a device. This device may be more or less subtle and is very often designed to bring these elements to the fore and to arrange them with one another in order to produce some sense. This sense should be understood as meaning (interpretation), direction (of reading) and sensibility (exaltation of plastic and aesthetic qualities). As such, we may speak of a rhetorical device if we remind ourselves that the three main fields of Ciceronian rhetoric are *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio*. But we also need to bear in mind that rhetoric was applied to the field of spirituality. As such, we may also speak of a strictly meditative device whose objectives are similarly threefold, if we follow the Jesuit method: *compositio* (composition of place), *meditatio* (exploration of deeper meanings), and *contemplatio* (enjoyment of the spiritual fruits by means of all the senses). In the context of this paper, we wish to focus attention on the *dispositio* and the *compositio*, the aim being to show that meditation is specifically an art of the 'montage' of images.

Framing the Bible

It seems that this kind of assemblage is used in a more systematic manner in series of engravings or for single prints, a fact that can be easily understood since the image is then sufficient unto itself, the text being relegated to the margins in the form of simple captions.² Through the

² An early example of the model might be the *Biblia pauperum* from the end of the Middle Ages, whose structure remains that of the Gothic altarpiece expressing the typological

insertion of a frame in which are displayed a series of images that may be very different in nature (historical, allegorical, emblematic . . .), the meaning of the central image is diffracted or condensed towards devotional or didactic ends. Thus, when the central image represents a biblical scene, its allegorical, tropological or anagogical meaning may be revealed by the marginal figures.

In this respect, a telling example is provided by the series of engravings designed by Joris Hoefnagel and published around 1590 with the title *Salus generis humani*.³ Here, the history of Salvation is outlined in seven stages from the Annunciation to the women at the tomb, with each scene from the Gospels framed by quotations, symbolic objects and biblical characters referring to other episodes. Let's take the example of the angelic greeting that opens the series [Fig. 1]. On the left, an angel descends, carrying a sun and a pine branch, recalling the attributes of Truth according to Ripa. On the right, another angel ascends, carrying a skull and a sheaf of wheat, symbols of death and resurrection. The word 'EMMA/NUEL' appears, in two parts, between the rungs of the ladders. Finally, in a medallion at the bottom of the plate lies Jacob, his head resting on his rock, on which we can read '*Caro factum est*', while on each side of the medallion are two other quotations taken from the episode of the dream and designating the place where Jacob sleeps, '*porta coeli*' and '*domus Dei*'. This linking of the two episodes, from the Old and the New Testaments, follows the typological principle of exegesis, but it is not enough to juxtapose them in order to recognize the meaning of this relationship; a commentary is still needed to make the relationship explicit. This commentary is performed by the representation which is fashioned in such a way as to introduce the idea of Incarnation into the episode of Jacob and that of Covenant into the episode of the Annunciation. The ladder itself with the angels is literally that of Jacob's dream, but the dissociation between the two ladders marks the two successive phases of redemption, allegorical and anagogical: the Incarnation or 'descent' of God into the flesh, so to speak ('*Verbum caro factum est*'), and the glorious Resurrection, the whole always maintaining God's transcendence. Thus, the movement of the angels on the ladders corresponds to the symbolic meanings of the central image, establishing

relations between episodes of the Old and New Testaments in the form of various panels. Each element has meaning only by virtue of its relationships with the other elements.

³ *Salus Generis Humani. Gratiae Diuinae in Iesu Christo Seruat. N Generi Humano Exhibita Amoenissima Specimina . . . Figuris Ac Emblematibus Proposita a Georg. Hofnagelio Belgae. Ioannes Ab Ach Figurau: Egidi Sadler Sculps.* (s.l., ca. 1590).



Fig. 1. Aegidius Sadeler after Joris Hoefnagel, *Annunciation* (ca. 1590). Engraving. Plate 1 of *Salus Generis Humani. Gratiae Diuinae in Iesu Christo Seruat. N Generi Humano Exhibitae Amoenissima Specimina* [...].

the literality of the 'descent' and of the 'ascent' as figurative key to the representation of the Annunciation.

Such a device clearly distinguishes the main image from its visual gloss and so presents the advantage of avoiding any mixture of figurative registers. However it must be noted that it is not really used in the field of illustrated religious literature.⁴ This may be easily understood from the fact that the text comments on the image or that the image illustrates the text, in the double sense of illuminating its meaning and conferring on it the required lustre. If we make an exception of the emblematic genre, which will be considered later, and continue in the genre of biblical illustration, this leads paradoxically to both the empowerment and the dependence of the image with regard to the text.

This can be explained by means of a sufficiently explicit example contemporary with Hoefnagel's engravings: the *Imagines et figurae biblicorum* by Pieter van der Borch, a series of biblical plates accompanying the exegetical commentaries by Hendrik Jansen van Barrefelt that appeared at the beginning of the 1590s.⁵ If we follow Van Barrefelt's reasoning as he develops it in his preface, the image, which forms a diptych with the text facing it, cannot be understood independently of its textual exegesis, which alone is able to reveal the deep meaning hidden behind the realist appearance of the scenes. The commentaries in effect convert the biblical figures into theological and moral allegories. Yet it remains the case that, visually, the image [Fig. 2], by means of its size and its quality, moreover emphasized by the presence of the frame that isolates it, seems able to lead an autonomous existence, freed from its gloss.⁶ This will be the

⁴ There are few exceptions which revive the late medieval tradition of the *marginalia* as in some editions of the *Humanae salutis monumenta* (Antwerp: 1571) by Benito Arias Montano, where each engraving is framed by vegetal and animal motifs resonating with the central scene. See Hänsel S, *Der spanische Humanist Benito Arias Montano (1527–1598) und die Kunst* (Münster: 1991) 68–89.

⁵ *Imagines et figurae Biblicorum. Images et figures de la Bible. Beelden ende figueren wt den Bybel* (s.l., s.d.). See Dekoninck R., "Entre Réforme et Contre-Réforme. Les *Imagines et Figurae Biblicorum* d'Hendrik Jansen van Barrefelt et Pieter van der Borch", *Quaerendo* 29 (1999) 96–131.

⁶ This is what happens since the plates by Van der Borch were published later on with other comments by Dutch editors. See Hamilton A, "From Familism to Pietism. The Fortunes of Pieter van der Borch's Biblical Illustrations and Hiël's Commentaries from 1584 to 1717", *Quaerendo* 11 (1981) 271–301; Visser P, "Jan Philipsz. Schabaelje and Pieter van der Borch's Etchings in the First and Final State. A Contribution to the Reconstruction of the Printing History of H.J. Barrefelt's *Imagines et figurae Biblicorum*", *Quaerendo* 18 (1988) 35–76.



Fig. 2. Pieter van der Borch, *Cain Murders Abel*. Engraved illustration from Hendrik Jansen van Barrefelt, *Imagines et figurae Bibliorum. Images et figures de la Bible. Beelden ende figueren wt den Bybel* (s.l., s.d).

dominant tendency in Protestant biblical iconography, where the realism and a certain literalism of the image have the upper hand.

In order to correct this tendency, which would only be accentuated in the *prentenbijbels* of the Dutch Republic,⁷ a different direction won out in the Catholic Netherlands under the influence of the Jesuits. The founding work in this case is the *Evangelicae historiae imagines*, the famous plates of the Gospels accompanied by Jerome Nadal's annotations and meditations which appeared two years later.⁸ In following the work of Walter Melion and Pierre-Antoine Fabre,⁹ we will limit ourselves to stressing the

⁷ Coelen P. van der, *De Schrift verbeeld. Oudtestamentische prenten uit Renaissance en Barok* (Nijmegen: 1998); idem, "Thesauri en Trezoren. Boeken en bundels met oudtestamentische prenten", in Tümpel C. – Boonen J. (eds.), *Het Oude Testament in de Schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw* (Zwolle: 1991) 168–193.

⁸ Nadal J., *Evangelicae historiae imagines ex ordine Evangeliorum* (Antwerp: 1593); Nadal J., *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur [...]* (Antwerp: Martin Nutius, 1595).

⁹ Fabre P.-A., *Ignace de Loyola. Le lieu de l'image. Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle* (Paris:

construction of a new form of the 'montage' of images that no longer go beyond the frame but that nevertheless depend on framing effects or more exactly on what we could term a 'backstage effect' (*effet de coulisses*) that is to say, on a framing that is internal to the representation. Staying with the theme of the Annunciation, it seems clear that between a previous version by Antonius Wierix [Fig. 3] and the plate of the *Imagines* engraved by Hieronymus Wierix [Fig. 4], internal margins were created in order to expand the present time by rewriting it in the long-term time of the history of Salvation, from the Creation of man to the Crucifixion. In this way, the Annunciation is reconnected to its invisible causes and consequences. The articulation between all the visual stages is made possible by a system of letters designating each of the elements and referring to the captions and to the annotations, which thus lead to the points of the meditation. For this is about composing a visual path facilitating the interpretation and memorization of places, times and actions, but also and above all the internalization of the Gospel message.

From this point of view, we may well speak of an authentic 'montage' of images, fused together in the same space. Furthermore, it should be noted that this 'montage' overflows from each plate taken in isolation, so that each plate is clearly a link in the chain that is the whole volume. This is achieved by means of series of repetitions and cross-references that contribute to the composition, in the end, of a kind of gallery or, rather, sacred ambulatory. This is certainly what the frontispiece of the volume [Fig. 5], which takes the form of an altarpiece, leads us to believe. This liminal image in effect suggests a space of imaginary projection, a mental space draped with Gospel images – as when the walls of a room are all covered by paintings.¹⁰

1992); idem, "La légende, cadre ou marge ? Voir/lire les *Evangelicae historiae imagines*...", in Rougé B. (ed.), *Cadres & Marges* (Pau: 1995) 45–51; Melion W.S., *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550–1625* (Philadelphia: 2009); Clifton J. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Scripture for the Eyes. Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century* [exh. cat., Museum of Biblical Art, New York – Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta] (New York: 2009), 14–106; Melion W.S., "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*", in Nadal J., *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, Volume 2: *The Infancy Narratives*, transl. F.A. Homann (Philadelphia: 2003) 1–96.

¹⁰ Such a compositional practice is partly confirmed by the fascinating manuscript discovered in Madrid by Guy Lazure. Dating probably from the middle of the seventeenth century, this manuscript reproduces only the letters from the plates, as if it were a matter of mentally (re-)composing the images, starting from these letters alone, an exercise that takes place in the time of meditation conceived, so to speak, as a cinematic process, in the sense of a process of assembling and giving movement to images.



Fig. 3. Antonius Wierix, *The Annunciation*. Engraving. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, Print Room.



Fig. 4. Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *Annunciatio*, in *Evangelicae historiae imagines ex ordine Evangeliorum* (Antwerp: 1593), plate 1. Louvain-la-Neuve, Bibliothèque universitaire.



Fig. 5. Hieronymus Wierix, *Title-Page*, in *Evangelicae historiae imagines ex ordine Evangeliorum* (Antwerp: 1593). Louvain-la-Neuve, Bibliothèque universitaire.

Framing Emblematics/Emblematic Frames

In order to explore further this construction of inner space we need to leave the field of biblical illustration and enter that of religious emblematics in the same period. While Hoefnagel's plates, as well as those of Barrefelt and Nadal, were able to lend themselves to an emblematic reading (as evidenced by the titles given to several of these kinds of suites of biblical images),¹¹ a significant step forward is taken in passing from *allegoria in factis* to *allegoria in verbis*; that is to say, we slip from the field of historical images charged with a divine meaning towards a symbolic language born of the human imagination, but one which seeks no less to bear witness to the divine plan and to the most intimate spiritual experience. While the composition of place still exists, the place to compose is now a strictly interior one. Now, this change of place is indicated in particular by a play on frames that appears especially inventive in the field of religious emblematics.¹² As in the field of illustrated biblical literature, visual tropes are put into place that frame the image in order to guide its interpretative reading and, beyond that, its meditative reading.

We can draw a kind of typology of these framing tropes, a typology that develops according to a chronology as well as by probably following the logic of the symbolic genres. Thus, while the moral emblematics of the second half of the sixteenth century in France made abundant use of ornamental and architectural frames, we very soon see the appearance in religious emblematics of figured frames, whose degree of figuration may serve as the distinguishing feature in establishing this typology. We can thus distinguish between several levels of figuration: 'lettered', semi-figured and figured frames. 'Lettered' frames derive from the medal form; they include inscriptions, mottos or titles, such as in Jakob Bornitz's or

¹¹ Coelen P. van der, "Emblemata sacra? Biblical Picture Books and Emblem Literature", in Manning J. – Porteman K. – Van Vaecck M. (eds.), *The Emblem Tradition and the Low Countries* (Turnhout: 1999) 261–278; Dekoninck R., "The Emblematic Conversion of the Biblical Image in Jesuit Literature (Nadal 1595-Engelgrave 1648)", *Emblematica* 16 (2008) 299–319.

¹² It is all the more interesting to study framing devices in the emblematic field since the emblem is in itself a *parergon*. So the frame is the *parergon* of a *parergon*. See the developments on this idea in Russell D., "Emblems, Frames, and Other Marginalia: Defining the Emblematic", *Emblematica* 17 (2009) 1–40; Guiderdoni A., "Le *parergon* du *parergon* ou quand le cadre se montre", in Cantillon A. – Fabre P.-A. (eds.) *Travailler avec Louis Marin (1992–2012)* (Paris: forthcoming 2014).



Fig. 6. Daniel Cramer, *Emblemata sacra* (Frankfurt, Lucas Jennis: 1624), emblem??.

Daniel Cramer's emblem books [Fig. 6].¹³ Semi-figured frames are a combination of usual frames and figures, derived from the cartouche form and often defining the form of the *impresa*. Such frames surround the engravings in Aresi's sacred *imprese* or in the *Imago primi saeculi* [Fig. 7].¹⁴ Lastly, figured frames are representation in themselves that frame another representation, such as the egg-frame in Stengel's *Ova paschalia*,¹⁵ or the dove-frame in Bivero's emblem books, which we will soon examine in

¹³ Bornitz Jakob, *Emblemata ethico politica* (Mainz, Ludwig Bourgeat: 1669); Cramer Daniel, *Emblemata sacra* (Frankfurt, Lucas Jennis: 1624).

¹⁴ Aresi Paolo, *Delle imprese sacre* (Verona, Angelo Tamo: 1615); *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu, a Provincia flandro-belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp, Balthazar Moretus: 1640).

¹⁵ Stengel Georg, *Ova paschalia* (Ingolstadt, widow of Johann Simon Knab: 1672).



Fig. 7. *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu, a Provincia flandro-belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp, Balthazar Moretus: 1640), p. 192. Louvain-la-Neuve, Bibliothèque universitaire.

greater detail. In illustrated religious literature, these framing choices, both semi-figured and figured, have a specific hermeneutic quality by virtue of the exclusive use they make of the biblical source text, in so far as this text is always to be interpreted, since it is always composed of several levels of meaning that the representation encodes and/or decodes. As we may easily imagine, the greater the extent of the frame's figuration, the more complex will be the hermeneutic interaction between the *ergon* and the *parergon*, and the more subtle the re-evaluation of the statuses of the text-Word and of the image in relation to one another. The figured-frame adds a supplement of meaning since it determines to a certain extent what should be said of the content. It presents itself as the clue to an allegorical reading of the content.

A telling example of figured frames applied to meditational emblematics can be found in the *Sacrum Oratorium* by the Spanish Jesuit, Pedro Bivero, published in Antwerp in 1634.¹⁶ At first sight, Bivero's work offers itself

¹⁶ Bivero Pedro, *Sacrum oratorium piarum imaginum immaculatæ Mariae, et animae creatæ ac baptismo, poenitentia et eucharistia innovatæ, ars nova bene vivendi et moriendi*,

as a game of image 'montage', since it is presented as a sacred oratory of pious images of Mary and of the soul. To put it another way, the five series of engravings the book contains must be arranged, mounted one after the other, by the reader, in order to construct a mental oratory in three parts.¹⁷ Two of the five series of engravings use a figured frame, identical for each engraving in the series. The first sets out to figure and to illustrate (*figurata et illustrata*) baptism as the 'new art of living and dying well' (*Ars nova bene vivendi & morendi*) by representing nine moments in the life of the Virgin, building each one around a verse from the *Ave Maria* [Fig. 8].¹⁸ Each *imago* reproduces a gigantic dove with spread wings, in whose breast nestles the main scene (Conception, Nativity, Presentation at the Temple, Annunciation, Visitation, etc.). The dove is taken from chapter 6 verse 9 of the *Song of Songs* and stands for the place of the Virgin's creation, in the bosom of the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, the dove-frame delimits a space whose repetitive form serves to mark the reader more effectively; while we may forget the details of the central scene, the form of the frame imposes, so to speak, a retinal persistence. And on the other hand, the dove-frame accomplishes a narrative and exegetical effect by revealing to the view a place usually hidden. This place is both the interior, even intimate, place of the dove and the mystical place at the heart of God. Finally, the dove-frame supplies the hermeneutic reading protocol to a biblical episode that does not at first sight appear to need interpretation, thus answering the question that was to be put by Ménestrier at the end of the century in his *Philosophie des images énigmatiques*: 'if I see a painting of Moses exposed on the river, of Job lying on a dunghill, of a Virgin holding the child Jesus, of the Transfiguration, [...] how can I recognize that it is an enigma, since there is nothing of the enigmatic in it [...]?'¹⁹ Like a precious stone in a jewel, each moment of the life of Christ is set by the dove-frame, showing that they must be worshipped: Catholics would not be misled and would know how to recognize the affirmation of the orthodoxy of the Marian cult, foreseen in God's plan since its beginnings (the Holy Spirit), conceived and carried in the bosom of God (repetition at

sacris piarum imaginum emblematis figurata et illustrata (Antwerp, Balthazar Moretus: 1634).

¹⁷ Ibidem f° 7r.

¹⁸ Ibidem 66–163.

¹⁹ '[...] si je vois un Tableau de Moïse exposé sur les eaux, de Job couché sur un fumier, d'une Vierge qui tient un Enfant Jesus, de la Transfiguration [...], comment puis-je reconnaître que c'est une Enigme, n'y ayant rien d'énigmatique [...]'; Ménestrier Claude-François, *La Philosophie des images énigmatiques* [...] (Lyon, Hilaire Baritel: 1694) 160.



Fig. 8. Pedro Bivero, *Sacrum oratorium piarum imaginum immaculatae Mariae*, [...] (Antwerp, Balthazar Moretus: 1634), p. 99. Louvain-la-Neuve, Bibliothèque universitaire.

each stage of the life of the Virgin). In doing this, the framing dove transforms each plate into an ornamental *and* meaningful piece – a veritable *emblem* in the etymological sense, a detachable and repositionable piece – in the overall setting of the oratory's decoration.

The second series, using a figured frame, is an appendix and takes the logic of the frame further, offering an additional level of interaction between *ergon* and *parergon*. It consists of fifteen images of the heart of Christ, as the new David, in which emblematic elements are presented as 'sealed' or 'imprinted' (*signatum*) [Fig. 9]. The heart-shape is obviously used as a signifying frame as much as the delimitation of the spiritual locus, inner space. However, because the emblematic content of the heart is presented as a seal or as an imprint, this content is implicitly equated to an 'image to be read'; it thus acquires a signifying quality, – fading its mimetic property. The heart-shape becomes finally the literal frame of a heart-canvas, without depth, without perspective, maybe even a wall upon which a crucifix and an actual seal are affixed [Fig. 10]. In contrast, we can compare it to the famous plates from the *Cor Jesu amanti sacrum* by Antoine Wierix, where the heart is also used as framing the divine operations of Jesus in the Christian heart. What takes place in this heart is a scene, of narrative quality, and the heart is just the place where it happens. In Bivero's plates, by contrast, the heart as a frame is at one with its content, which changes therefore the status of the image: it becomes an actual emblem of what must be imprinted or sealed in the beholder's heart, an 'images to be spoken' or 'to be read'. Properly speaking, according to the terms used by Bivero himself, the dove and the heart are forms (*formae*) of the image: by giving figure to the frame, they give form and figure to thought of the image and on the image; they present themselves both as trope and as meta-discourse.²⁰

Finally, we would like to conclude with an example in which frames take complete charge of the discursive organization of the combinatory assembly of biblical images and emblematic images. It consists of two works by the German engraver, painter and printer, Johann Ulrich Krauss (1655–1719). The first of these works was published in Augsburg in 1706 with the title *Heilige Augen-und Gemüths-Lust*. The full title can be translated as: 'The Divine pleasure of the eyes and of the heart/soul,

²⁰ The same can be observed in the *Ova Paschalia* by the Jesuit Georg Stengel, published in Ingolstadt in 1678. In this emblem book, not only is each emblem in the shape of an egg, but also most of them integrate an egg-related theme in their engravings.



Fig. 9. Pedro Bivero, *Sacrum oratorium piarum imaginum immaculatae Mariae*, [...] (Antwerp, Balthazar Moretus: 1634), p. 730. Louvain-la-Neuve, Bibliothèque universitaire.



Fig. 10. Pedro Bivero, *Sacrum oratorium piarum imaginum immaculatae Mariae*, [...] (Antwerp, Balthazar Moretus: 1634), p. 719. Louvain-la-Neuve, Bibliothèque universitaire.

presenting all the Sundays and feast days, not only of the Gospels but also of the Epistles and Sermons, historical and emblematic, with curious borders, in numerous engravings of new and strange invention, useful as well for artistic exercises as for spiritual exercise for contemplation, as well as additional biblical engravings and summary of all Christian sermons'.²¹ First of all, it is remarkable that the work highlights as early as its title the 'borders' (*Einfassungen*) which are characterized as 'curious'. This explicit focus on the frame is rare – if not unique – in the emblematic and biblical literature. As with the vast majority of collections, the work has a precise functional aim, revealed immediately in the title. It is in fact composed according to the liturgical calendar and provides a commentary in images and text on the biblical text for each day of the year. It simultaneously serves liturgical, pastoral and devotional purposes. However, when one discovers Krauss's plates, one is justified in asking oneself about their real functionality, for their readability seems compromised by the level of virtuosity and subtlety of the construction. There is a saturation of the senses – as sensitive and as meaningful.

The frontispiece alone [Fig. 11] might suffice for our study, for it presents the entirety of the work in the form of a structure draped – again as when tapestries cover all the walls of a room – in images to travel through; it is representative of the level of complexity that this work establishes in its play of cross-references and multiple mirrors that it keeps to confuse, to fuse the one into the other and to displace. But above all, it calls into question the equilibrium or rather the hierarchy between image and scriptural text. The composition is set in a palace, where we discover a crowd of characters, two of whom are easily recognizable: shown in the foreground are Saint Peter and Saint Paul, each of them holding a medallion on which is inscribed a quotation from their writings. This same kind of medallion and scriptural wall plaque is found at various points of the structure. They remind us that it is first of all the Word of God that is to be glorified as the only 'image' worthy of adoration. In addition, in counterpoint to the lectern, at the foot of the steps we find a medallion in

²¹ Krauss Johann Ulrich, *Heilige Augen-und Gemüths-Lust, vorstellend alle Sonn-Fest-und Feyrtägliche nicht nur Evangelien sondern auch Epistelen und Lectionen [...] jene historisch diese auch Emblematisch und mit curieusen Einfassungen In vielen Kupfer-Stucken von fremder und ganz neuer Invention, so wohl zur Kunst-Übung als Unterhaltung Gottseeliger Betrachtungen wie auch Vermehrung der Kupffer-Biblen und Ausszierung aller Christlichen Postillen dienlich* (Augsburg, J.U. Krauss: 1706).

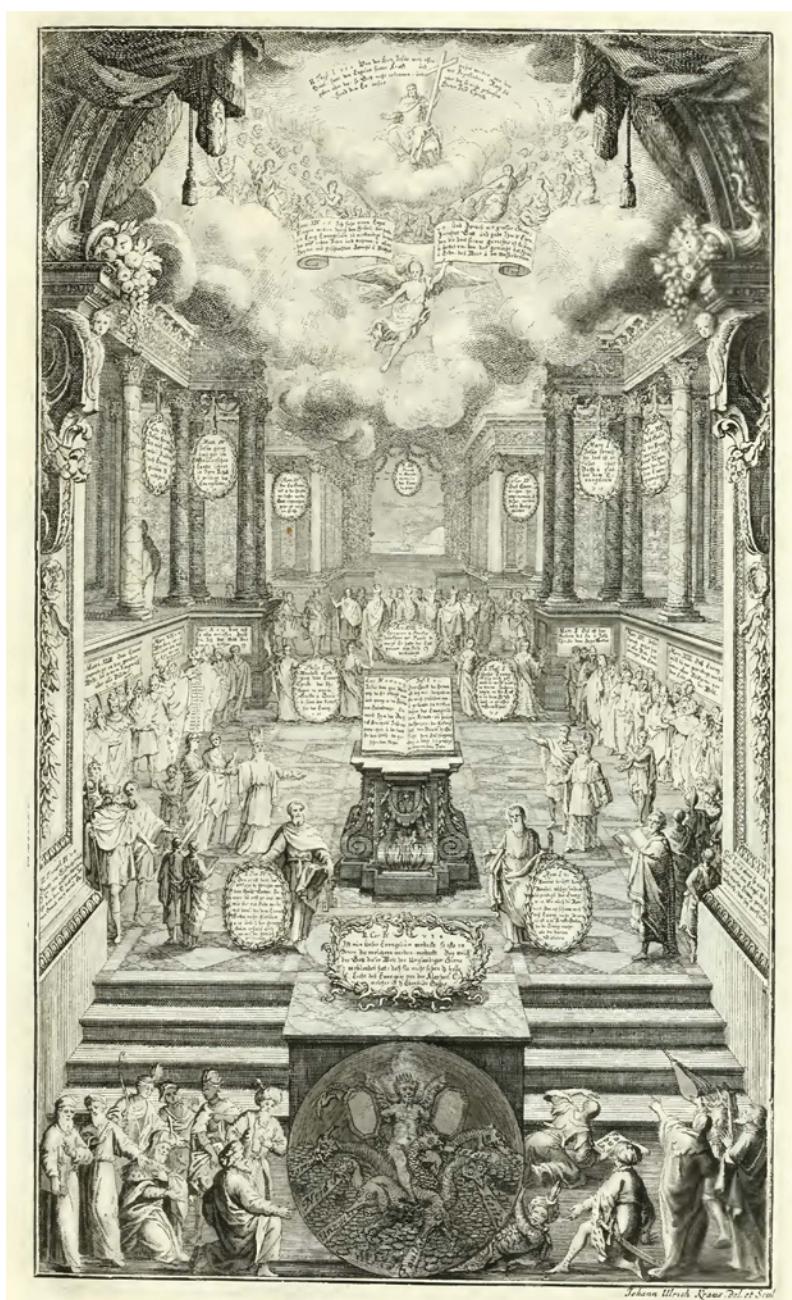


Fig. 11. Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Frontispiece*, in Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Heilige Augen-und Gemüths-Lust [...]* (Augsburg, J.U. Krauss: 1706). London, British Library.

shadow showing Satan riding the seven-headed Hydra and offering two empty mirrors to the spectator's view. It is striking that the only image inserted as an image into this frontispiece should be precisely that of the idolatrous demon. We also notice a character kneeling at the foot of the steps with a book open before him in which we can read: '*Fabula*'. Thus fiction – since the *Fabula* is the raw material of fiction – is opposed to Truth as the place of error and lies. As well as this opposition, we should also emphasize the effect of inversion between the position of the images and that of the texts: the texts are framed like images in order to remind us that behind the image, beyond the image, there is the biblical Word. But this relationship is reversed in the rest of the collection, where the pages are saturated with visual elements and the text is reduced to a few lines in the margins.

If we take the example of the plate devoted to the Annunciation [Fig. 12], we can observe that it combines the representation of the Annunciation with the prophecy of *Isaiah* (7:14): 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call him Immanuel'. This second image impresses by a framing that is much more refined than that of the first image, which remains sober. This is as if to affirm all the more the status of the Annunciation as completed historical and theological truth, while the Old Testament foreshadowing appears like a framed artifice. This latter image is accompanied at top and bottom by two emblematic medallions, each one with its motto ('she composes all' and 'all is subject to me').²² In this fairly classic typological relationship between the Old and New Testaments, the addition of the emblems makes it possible to connect the two biblical pieces, to compose them, in the etymological sense of *componere* that is, to place them together. Furthermore, in a much more explicit way than in Nadal, each plate is designed as an imported piece brought into a structure. This is made fairly clear by the frontispieces, as we have just seen and as confirmed by the frontispiece of the second volume, where the biblical scenes are inscribed in a kind of church choir [Fig. 13]. For this is a matter of composing a space of prayer and meditation, as the engraving [Fig. 14] that opens the preface also invites us to do. We find there a young woman to whom an angel and the allegory of Time are presenting a book

²² '*Omnia componit*' and '*Omnes sub jugo meo*'.



Fig. 13. Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Frontispiece*, in Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Heilige Augen-und Gemüths-Lust* [...], vol. 2 (Augsburg, J.U. Krauss: 1706). London, British Library.



Fig. 14. Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Lectio divina*, in Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Heilige Augen-und Gemüths-Lust* [...] (Augsburg, J.U. Krauss: 1706). London, British Library.

which is none other than Krauss's folio. This *mise en abyme* is repeated by the scenes decorating the room which are laid out in such a way as so to recompose the story of the Gospels. This principle was to be used again in the 1706 *Historischer Bilder Bibel* by the same author.²³ The plates that open each Gospel are presented in the form of a cabinet of biblical paintings. The one devoted to the Gospel of Luke shows us the saint at work seeking his inspiration in the images [Fig. 15], unless these images are the projection of this inspiration, as seems to be demonstrated by the presence of the empty easel to the right. It is now possible to understand all the paintings as the fruit of the incarnated Word. We should also note that what the patron saint of painters is gazing at is precisely the Annunciation as the moment of Incarnation of the Word.

²³ Krauss Johann Ulrich, *Historischer Bilder Bibel erster (-fünfter) Theil* (Augsburg, J.U. Krauss: 1706).



Fig. 15. Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Das Evangelium S. Lucae*, in Johann Ulrich Krauss, *Historischer Bilder Bibel erster (-fünfter) Theil* (Augsburg, J.U. Krauss: 1706), p. 120. London, British Library.

Conclusions

In conclusion, one can tentatively define three major types of 'montage', which regulate relations between the *ergon* and the *parergon*, by combining the nature of the frame and the nature of the framed image from a functional point of view. The first type consists of the historical or literal representation of a biblical episode, around which a visual trope is affixed, or another framing assemblage supplying the means for exegesis of the image. In this situation, the figurative levels are relatively distinct (for example narrative and emblematic) and the interaction between frame and central image follows a typological and/or allegorical logic. The second type consists of the representation of a biblical character as an object of devotion and meditation (for example, the Virgin in Bivero's *Sacrum Oratorum*). The symbolic quality of this biblical figure, and hence his or her allegorical understanding, is therefore already partially present. In this case, either the frame completes the clarification of this exegesis, or it serves a different end than exegesis proper, namely the insertion of the image in a wider performative device (devotional, meditative, didactic...). Finally, the third type is a symbolic or emblematic representation of biblical verse, a point in dogma or a point in morality (the heart series in Bivero). Here the framing elements will function in a rhetorical fashion by supplying supplements to interpretation, or they will refer back to the biblical-source episode in a movement opposite to that at work in the first type of 'montages'.

For the time being, this typology is a heuristic proposition and should be further refined, especially by an enquiry into the positions of the *allegoria in factis* and the *allegoria in verbis* as they relate to one another. It should also be applied to the different treatment of the frame within different confessional contexts. As Werner Wolf explains: 'frames are cognitive guides of interpretation that are cultural constructs and hence have a certain historical and cultural flexibility according to different cultures and periods'.²⁴ This is maybe what surfaces in Krauss' irenist aspirations, expressed in his preface. He explains there that he produced his work for any Christians, and thus tried to content all readerships:

²⁴ Wolf W., "Introduction: Frames, Framings and Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media", in Wolf W. – Bernhart W. (eds.), *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media* (Amsterdam: 2006) 4.

All Christian religions could come to pass in the Holy Roman Empire so that no one should be harmed / since people at least [get] an education from the text of the Holy Scripture and Epistles without having to refer to any *gloss* / and that the accompanying verse is arranged / so that only the *Summa* of what is included in the text or presented in the image / brings [one] to a Christian memory or consolation; moreover, that all shall be abstracted with great application as much from verse as from education / extraction, in order that *neither one nor the other religion be in the slightest touched or hurt*.²⁵

His aim is to reconcile the conflicting faiths by means of a 'montage' of images and texts that may dispense with any gloss. Offering to the reader, as we saw, images that 'speak' and texts that exhibit themselves, Krauss gets around the mistrust of some towards images and the suspicion of others towards the presentation of bare texts. The combination of text, reduced to the strict minimum and inserted into a hermeneutical visual path, and images, given considerable breadth and designed as an exegetical play of mutual references and dialogues, gives rise to a device that can be justly qualified as intermedial and should be studied as such so as to grasp all the related stakes.

Indeed, as Wolf's work suggests, studies on frames and framing are associated with what is now called 'intermediality'. Intermediality should be understood here as the possibility of studying the displacements or the blur of the frontiers that thus modify and manipulate both the reading and the reader to implement cross-reading and cross-viewing. For indeed we deal with reader as much as beholder, and the frontiers we just alluded to lie between media, between word and image. Intermediality is also there, in the exchange between the word as image and the image as word, related to one another or even somehow confused by a figurative process. If the eye reads, it is thanks to the marginal but nonetheless insistent meta-discourse of the frame.

²⁵ Krauss, *Heilige Augen-und Gemüths-Lust*, 'Vorbericht' [2] (our italics).

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‘THE GLORY OF THE LAST HOUSE’ (*HAGGAI* 2:9):
REMBRANDT AND THE PROPHETS MALACHI AND HAGGAI

Shelley Perlove

Rembrandt was deeply interested in the Jerusalem Temple, especially the Second Temple, the sacred setting for Christ’s infancy and ministry.¹ From the beginning of Rembrandt’s career to the end of his life, the artist produced at least twenty-two works portraying Christ’s interactions with the priests, ceremonies, Pharisees, and Scribes of the Temple. These works also reveal Rembrandt’s abiding interests in the details of the Temple in all its aspects – elaborate architecture, furnishings, priestly vestments, and rites. Some of these Temple settings are theatrical, grand, and opulent, while others are sparse, with little detail. The artist’s fundamental conception of the Temple, in all its ramifications, however, was firmly grounded in the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets Haggai and Malachi, precisely as interpreted in Christian historical and contemporary biblical and extra-biblical texts.

Like many ancient and contemporary writers on the Temple, the artist emphasized the opulence and scale of the sacred complex that King Herod rebuilt in 37–34 B.C.E. This is especially evident in The Hague *Simeon’s Song of Praise* of 1631, where the artist evokes vast spaces and soaring heights that dwarf the figures within it [Fig. 1]. Rembrandt’s Temple interiors feature grandiose pillars,² fine stone pavements,³ heavily draped

¹ For a full account of Rembrandt and the Jerusalem Temple, Perlove S. – Silver L., *Rembrandt’s Faith. Church and Temple in the Dutch Golden Age* (University Park: 2009).

² See *Hannah and Simeon in the Temple*, c.1627–28, Hamburg, Kunsthalle (Bredius 535); *The Repentant Judas*, 1629, England, private collection (Bredius 539A); *Christ Disputing with the Doctors: Small Plate*, etching, 1630 (Bartsch 66); *The Presentation in the Temple: Small Plate*, 1630, etching (Bartsch 51) [Fig. 5]; *Simeon’s Song of Praise*, 1631, oil on panel, The Hague (Bredius 543) [Fig. 1]; *Christ Driving the Money Changers*, 1635, etching (Bartsch 69); *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); *Peter and John at the Temple Gate*, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94).

³ *Christ Disputing with the Doctors: Small Plate*, etching, 1630 (Bartsch 66); *Simeon’s Song of Praise*, 1631, oil on panel, The Hague (Bredius 543) [Fig. 1]; *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); *Peter and John at the Temple Gate*, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94); *Presentation in the Temple: In the Dark Manner*, etching, 1654 (Bartsch 50) [Fig. 5].

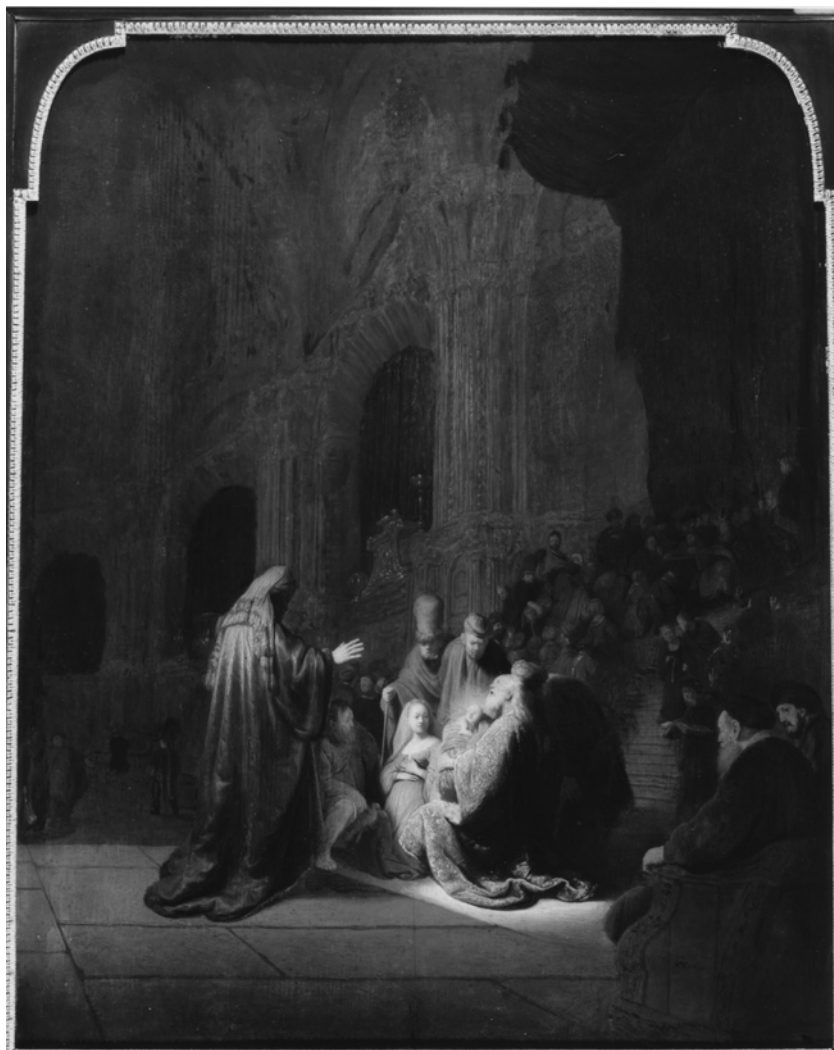


Fig. 1. Rembrandt, *Simeon's Song of Praise*, 1631. Oil on panel, 60.9 × 47.8 cm. The Hague, Mauritshuis, Bredius 543. The Hague, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis.

entrances,⁴ elaborate staircases,⁵ and gold furnishings,⁶ all of which convey the material splendor of the complex described in Temple sources. Rembrandt's Temple settings depend upon the careful studies of learned patrons and acquaintances that drew upon such historical and contemporary texts as the writings of Flavius Josephus, the *Mishna Middot*, the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides, and the commentaries of John Calvin, Constantijn L'Empereur, Hugo Grotius, and John Lightfoot. Rembrandt also utilized the visual tradition of northern European art and consulted architectural elevations and plans of the reconstructed Temple published by L'Empereur and others.

Rembrandt's formulations on the Temple were especially indebted to the Statenbijbel, the Dutch translation of the Bible from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts, which appeared with copious notes and paraphrases strongly influenced by Calvin.⁷ The translation project had its origins within Calvinist orthodoxy of the Synod of Dort (1618/1619). Unhappy with Dutch Bibles translated from Lutheran Bibles, the Synod requested the States General to produce a translation from 'original' texts, on the model of the King James Bible of 1611. The Dutch translation project began in 1626, with manuscripts in circulation until its completion in 1635 and publication in 1637 in Leiden, Rembrandt's home town.

Rembrandt's staging of gospel narratives in Temple settings is related in significant, fundamental ways to the Hebrew prophets Malachi and Haggai, whose prophecies were employed as proof texts to demonstrate that Jesus was the promised Messiah foretold in Hebrew Scripture. Both

⁴ *The Presentation in the Temple*: Small Plate, 1630, etching (Bartsch 51); *Christ Driving the Money Changers*, 1635, etching (Bartsch 69); *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); *Peter and John at the Temple Gate*, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94); *Presentation in the Temple: In the Dark Manner*, etching, 1654 (Bartsch 50).

⁵ *The Presentation in the Temple*: Small Plate, 1630, etching (Bartsch 51); *Christ Driving the Money Changers*, 1635, etching (Bartsch 69); *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); *Peter and John at the Temple Gate*, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94); *Presentation in the Temple: In the Dark Manner*, etching, 1654 (Bartsch 50).

⁶ *The Repentant Judas*, 1629, England, private collection (Bredius 539A); *The Presentation in the Temple*: Small Plate, 1630, etching (Bartsch 51); *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); *Peter and John at the Temple Gate*, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94).

⁷ *Biblia* (Statenbijbel), *dat is de gantsche H. Schrifteure, vervattende alle de Canonijcke Boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments, Door last der Hoogh-Mog: Heeren Staten Generael van de Vereenighde Nederlanden en volgens het Besluit van de Synode Nationael, gehouden tot Dordrecht in de Iaren 1618 en 1619 [...]* (Leiden: 1637).

Jews and Christians focused upon Haggai in discussing the coming of the Messiah. Haggai, writing after the return to Jerusalem from Babylon and during the re-building of the Temple, prophesies that the glory of the later Temple would be greater than the first (2:7–10):

For thus saith the Lord of hosts, once again, a
 little time it shall be, and I shall cause the heavens
 and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land to shake.
 [...] I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.
 Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold, saith
 the Lord of hosts. The glory of this last house
 shall become greater than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts
 and in this place will I give peace.⁸

The *Statenbijbel* notes on *Haggai* 2:7 offer a conventional Christological reading of these passages, by which the shaking of heaven and earth signifies Christ's 'birth, suffering, dying, rising from the dead, and ascending to heaven', as well as the evangelical apostolate mission. The *Statenbijbel* interprets the verse, 'I will fill this house with glory', to be a prophecy of Christ's entry into the Temple 'to preach and work miracles in it', and 'to dwell in his Church by his grace and spirit'. These passages served as Christian 'proof texts', arguing that Jesus was the promised Messiah who brought glory to the Temple in fulfillment of the prophecy. Grotius in his *De veritate religionis Christianae* (Defense of the Christian Religion) of 1622 stated that the Second Temple was rebuilt magnificently by Herod, so that it exceeded the Solomonic Temple, precisely as stated in Haggai's prophecy.⁹

Haggai 2:7–10 was often coupled with *Malachi* 3:1–3 in discussions of the Second Temple in the *Statenbijbel* notes, which were, like all the annotations, indebted to Calvin.¹⁰ The oft-quoted passages from *Malachi*, the last of the Old Testament prophets, states (3:1–3):

⁸ All biblical quotations in English in this article are taken from the English translation of 1657 of the *Statenbijbel*; see Haak Theodore, *The Dutch Annotations upon the whole Bible or all the Holy Canonical Scriptures* [...] (London, Henry Hills: 1657).

⁹ See Grotius Hugo, *De veritate religionis Christianae* (Paris, Sumptibus Seb. Cramoisy: 1640) 171–172; also, Sandys George, *Annotations to 'Christ's Passion. A Tragedie'* (London: John Legatt, 1640), annotations to verse 119, 100. The note refers to Herod Antipas, whose father Herod the Great so 'magnificently re-edified the Temple [...]'. For more on the polemics, see Rooden P. van, *Constantijn L'Empereur, Professor Hebreuws en theologie te Leiden. Theologie, bijbehewetenschap en rabbijnse studien in de zeventiende eeuw* (Ph.D., Leiden University: 1985) 191–196.

¹⁰ Consult annotations to the *Statenbijbel* for *Haggai* 2:8, which reference *Malachi* 3:1. Calvin John, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* 4, Haggai, Part 1, trans. J. Owen (Grand Rapids: 1950). Online source: ichnet.org/pub/resources/text/m.sion/Calvhagg.htm.

Behold, I send mine messenger who shall prepare thy way
 before my face: and suddenly shall that Lord come unto his temple,
 whom ye seek, to wit, the angel of the Covenant in whom
 ye delight; behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts.
 But who shall endure the day of his coming? And who shall subsist,
 when he appeareth? For he shall be as the fire of a goldsmith and as
 the soap of the fullers: And he shall sit, refining and purifying the silver,
 and he shall cleanse the children of Levi and he shall refine them thoroughly
 as gold and as silver [...]

As explained in the *Statenbijbel*, *Malachi* 3:1 refers to St. John the Baptist as the messenger and Christ as the angel of the covenant who entered the Temple and purified it of its corruption.

Many Christian Hebraists like Grotius challenged rabbinical interpretations of Haggai in order to 'prove' that Jesus was the 'glory of the latter Temple'.¹¹ Jewish writers said that the 'last house' of *Haggai* 2:10 was not the Second Temple, but actually the promised Third Temple of Ezekiel's vision, which would be built with the advent of the Jewish Messiah. The Second Temple, they argued, could not be more glorious than the former, because it did not enjoy the blessing of peace and lacked the spiritual benefits of the Solomonic Temple. Elements lacking in Herod's Temple were known as the Five Prerogatives, which are: fire descending from heaven, the holy ark, holiness, divinity, and the spirit of prophecy. The famous Dutch Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel expressed these rabbinic interpretations in his discussion of *Haggai* 2:9 in his popular treatise, *The Conciliator* (1632), a text read by Christians as well as Jews.¹² Grotius used a portion of the rabbinical text *Gemara Hieros* 3 to explain that before the Messiah entered the Temple, it lacked 'divine afflatus', meaning spiritual communication with God; Grotius described the divine afflatus as a conspicuous light of divine majesty.¹³ These deficiencies were overcome, Grotius believed, when Jesus came to restore divinity to the Temple and 'heal a corrupted age'.¹⁴

These discussions of *Haggai* and *Malachi* remain essential to Rembrandt's images related to the Second Temple. His etching based on the

¹¹ See, for example, More Henry, *An explanation of the grand mystery of godliness, or, A true and faithfull representation of the everlasting Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the onely begotten Son of God and sovereign over men and angels* by H. More [...] (London, J. Flesher for W. Morden: 1660) 290.

¹² Israel Manasseh ben, *The Conciliator of R. Manasseh ben Israel; a Reconcilement of the Apparent Contradictions in Holy Scripture*, trans. E.H. Lindo (New York: 1972) 230–32.

¹³ Grotius Hugo, *Against Paganism, Judaism, Mahumetism*, trans. Clement Barksdale (London: printed for Clement Barksdale, 1676) 50.

¹⁴ *Ibidem* 48, 52.



Fig. 2. Rembrandt, *The Triumph of Mordecai*, c. 1641. Etching, 17 × 21.2 cm. (Bartsch 40). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. Richard Cary Curtis, 56.293. Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Book of Esther from the Hebrew Bible, *The Triumph of Mordecai* of around 1641, situates the honoring of Mordecai within the hopes of his people for the rebuilding of the Temple [Fig. 2].

Scholars have long noted Rembrandt's unusual attention to the Esther narrative, a story from the Hebrew Bible, supplemented in the Apocrypha, and set within the period of Jewish exile in Persia after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.¹⁵ The king of Persia and Media, Ahasuerus (*Ezra* 4:6; *Daniel* 9:1), 'who reigned from India to Ethiopia', is usually identified with the historical figure of Xerxes I (486–65 BCE). The capital city mentioned in the biblical text, Susa, was a winter capital alongside the permanent capital at Persepolis. But the text is a story of Jewish near-genocide at the

¹⁵ Kahr M., *The Book of Esther in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Ph.D. New York University: 1966); Waal van de H., "Rembrandt and the Feast of Purim", in *Steps towards Rembrandt: Collected Articles, 1937–1972* (Amsterdam: 1974) 199–223; Perlove S., "An Irenic Vision of Utopia: Rembrandt's 'Triumph of Mordecai' and the New Jerusalem", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1993) 38–60.

hands of the royal minister, Haman. The agents of Jewish salvation were Queen Esther, wife of Ahasuerus, and her kinsman Mordecai.

Biblical commentary on the Esther narrative speaks of future Jewish redemption, the return of exiled Jews to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple. The *Statenbijbel* notes for *Daniel* 9 (1–3) report that the first year of the reign of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, marked when the ‘Children of Israel’ would go back (seventy years after the destruction of the Temple), as prophesied by *Jeremiah* (25:11–12; 27:7; 29:10). Calvin also explained (*Daniel* 9:1–3):

Daniel knew the time of redemption was at hand, as the Babylonian monarchy was changed and transferred to the Medes and Persians. [...] Cyrus and Darius published their edict about the same time, by which the Jews were permitted to return to their native country. In that year, therefore, meaning the year in which Darius began his reign.¹⁶

The narrative of *The Triumph of Mordecai* (*Esther* 6:1–14) occurs after Haman arranged for the annihilation of the Jews. The etching portrays a ceremonial mounted procession, the king’s reward to Mordecai for saving his life by foiling an assassination attempt. Haman had suggested this honor for himself, but was compelled instead to confer it upon his bitter enemy, whom he led through the city streets in triumph.

Rembrandt’s print shows Mordecai in royal robes, carrying a scepter and mounted on the king’s own steed led by a disgraced Haman. In Rembrandt’s staging, the scene is densely crowded and chaotic. Some figures bow before Mordecai, while a cruel-looking official beats a path through the crowd with a whip. The king himself observes the scene, approvingly, together with Queen Esther from a balcony at the right. The inclusion of the royal couple within this scene is unusual and forecasts Esther’s special, courageous role in securing the salvation of her people by intervening with her husband.

Rembrandt, however, includes another detail in his *Mordecai* etching that is unprecedented within the visual tradition. In the crowd at the right, a devout Jew with side curls (*pe’ot*) seems especially moved, and draws his hand to his chest as he gazes prophetically at Mordecai. He not only recognizes that the figure on horseback will save his people, but seems to understand that Mordecai is associated with the prophet Malachi. Most importantly for Christians, the Argument (introductory paraphrase) of the

¹⁶ Calvin John, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. T. Myers (Grand Rapids, MI: 1948) vol. II.

Statenbijbel for *Malachi* makes explicit the prophet's role as a link to both Christ and the restored Temple, already anticipating the New Covenant to follow:

[...] He fortelleth likewise, for the comfort of the godly, the Communion of Christ, as also of his fore-runner John the Baptist: and that Christ should abolish the shadowes and figures of the Old Testament, and instead thereof plant and establish the true worship of God [...]

Malachi's prophetic text appears last in this Bible, before the beginning of the New Testament. These ideas linking Mordecai with Malachi, however, derive from the *Mishnah*, which was seriously studied by such contemporary Christian Hebraists as Georgius Gentius, Gerardus Johannus Vossius, and Constantijn L'Empereur.¹⁷ The fusion of Mordecai and Malachi in Meggillah 15a was also known to other Christian Hebraists, including the Puritan Matthew Poole (1624–79), a well-known expositor of the Bible. Contemporary Dutch literature also links the Esther narrative to the restoration of Zion. Jacobus Revius's *Haman, A Tragedy* (published in 1630) ends with a chorus of mourning Hebrew women expressing hopes for the Jewish return to Jerusalem:

Mighty Savior, who from our misery,
Before we have made an end to hope,
Provides that in Zion your dispersed people
One day gather.¹⁸

Moreover, Grotius repeatedly referred to the rebuilding of the Temple in his notes to the Book of Esther in *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum*, which appeared in 1644.¹⁹ In his annotations to *Esther* 1:1, the biblical passage introducing King Ahasuerus, Grotius follows the *Statenbijbel* and cites *Ezra* 4:6, which refers to the king's cessation of work on the Temple.²⁰ Grotius also mentions Cyrus and his restoration of the Temple, citing

¹⁷ On the study of the Talmud in the seventeenth century, see Katchen A., *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis. Seventeenth-Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (Cambridge, MA: 1984) 127–35. The Christian Hebraists studied and translated Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, commentaries on the *Mishnah*.

¹⁸ Revius Jacobus, *Over-Ysselsche Sangen en Dicten*, ed. W.A.P. Smit (Amsterdam: 1930) 181: 'Machtigen heylant, die van ons elende/ Eer wy het hoopten hebt gemaect enn ende,/ Geeft dat in Sion u verstroyde scharen/ Eenmael vergaren.'

¹⁹ Grotius Hugo, *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum & Novum Testamentum juxta editionem Amstelædamensem* (London, Joseph Smith, Guillaume Mears, Joseph Pote and Nicholas Moody: 1727).

²⁰ Idem, *Opera omnia Theologica in Tres Tomos Divisa I* (Amsterdam, Joannis Blaeu: 1679) 198.

Ezra 1:2 (for *Esther* 2:6), the passage that explains that Mordecai was among the captives carried away from Jerusalem at its first destruction.

Jewish sources claim that Mordecai petitioned Ahasuerus to rebuild the holy site and that his tribe Benjamin, along with Judah, returned to Israel at the insistence of Esther and began to rebuild the Temple under Darius, son of Ahasuerus.²¹ This legend was recounted in the treatise harmonizing Hebrew biblical texts, *Conciliador* (1632) by Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam, but was also stated in the *Statenbijbel*.²² Finally, according to *Mishnah Middoth* 3, there was one further link that connected Jerusalem's holy site to the period of exile in Persia. An image of the Palace of Susa was depicted on the eastern gate (Sushan or Golden Gate) of the Second Temple, so that the Jews would remember their former period of captivity.²³ This point of information would have been known to Rembrandt's contemporaries from Constantijn L'Empereur's Latin translation of *Mishnah Middoth* of 1630.²⁴ Rembrandt's more scholarly acquaintances might have informed him of the connections between the Esther story and the return to Jerusalem, and the artist surely read with interest the Dutch States Bible. Thus in view of these texts, the Jew in Rembrandt's *Mordecai* print may be understood to invoke salvation and the future restoration of the Temple.

Rembrandt's indebtedness to the Hebrew prophets Malachi and Haggai is readily apparent in narratives set within the precincts of the Second Temple. In these images Rembrandt portrayed Jesus as the savior who restored the glory of the Temple (*Haggai* 2:7–10). Rembrandt's deep engagement with the prophets Haggai and Malachi is conveyed through the works themselves. Rembrandt's tiny print, *Circumcision of Christ*, shows a priest standing at the Temple altar, presiding over billowing clouds of incense rising from an ornate portable fire vessel [Fig. 3].²⁵ The imposing figure of the high priest, the arc of smoke, the priestly *mohel*

²¹ Ginzberg L., *Legends of the Jews* 4 (Philadelphia: 1913) 381–83.

²² Israel, *Conciliator* 325; Perlove, "Irenic Vision" 47, noting that Manasseh repeated the same tale later in Israel, Manasseh ben, *Manasseh ben Israel: The Hope of Israel*, trans. Moses Wall (reprint of 1652 edition, Oxford: 1987) 158.

²³ On the Sushan Gate of the Temple, see Lightfoot John, *The Temple, especially as it stood in days of our Saviour* (London, by Richard Cotes for Andrew Crook: 1650) 8. Lightfoot was one of the most distinguished scholars of the Temple in Rembrandt's time.

²⁴ L'Empereur de Oppyck Constantijn, *Maseket middot mittalmud bavli: hoc est, Talumudis Babylonici codex Middoth sive De Mensuris temple* (Leiden, Bonaventura and Abraham II Elzevier: 1630).

²⁵ As in 1 *Kings* 7:50, which mentions 'incense cups, and the censers of enclosed gold'. See a type of fire burner used by Persians illustrated in Justi F., *Geschichte des Alten Persiens* (Berlin: 1879) 74.



Fig. 3. Rembrandt, *The Circumcision: Small Plate*, 1630. Etching, 8.7 × 6.3 cm. (Bartsch 48 1/11). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Harvey D. Parker Collection, P432. Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

who performs the circumcision, and the infant Jesus merge together into an oval connecting the Jewish ritual of circumcision with the incense ceremony. Rembrandt's coupling of the Circumcision with Temple fire is unusual within the visual tradition. The artist gives strong emphasis to the incense rite, and invokes its mystery. The light-infused smoke is as bright and miraculous as Christ's own radiance. Awed by the sight of it, a man behind the middle-aged couple at the right turns his head upward and gapes in wonder at the smoking blaze.

As told in 1 *Kings* 8:1–13, after the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Solomonic Temple, the cloud of God's glory filled its spaces. The custom of carrying incense within the Temple was observed in the Second Temple, as it was in the First. According to seventeenth-century Temple scholars, priests of the Second Temple, known as Sadducees, burned incense outside the Holy of Holies or Oracle.²⁶ Such pre-eminent Temple scholars as John Lightfoot considered the priest's daily offerings of incense within the Temple to be a type for Christ as both Priest and Mediator. In conjunction with this interpretation, the smoke rising from the altar was viewed as a type for prayers ascending to heaven.²⁷ Since the incense altar was situated within the sanctuary of the Temple, outside the oracle, this is presumed as the setting for Rembrandt's print.²⁸

Since discussions of Haggai and Malachi emphasized that the Herodian Temple lacked the Solomonic Prerogative of divine fire, the billowing clouds of smoke filling the upper spaces of Rembrandt's etching adduce the 'glory' restored to the Temple by Jesus. Rembrandt associated the infant Jesus with the divine cloud that once filled the Solomonic Temple, but which returned to the Second Temple with Christ's advent as redeemer.

Another relevant rite associated with the circumcision is the naming of Jesus, as told in *Luke* 2:21. Another prophecy of Malachi, interpreted as predicting the coming of Christ, is here invoked by the incense fire in Rembrandt's etching. The association of incense with the naming ceremony invokes a passage in *Malachi* 1:11, which states:

²⁶ See Weemse John, *A Treatise of the foure degenerate sonnes viz. the atheist the magician the idolater and the Jew* (London, Thomas Cotes: 1636) 314.

²⁷ This is based upon the interpretation of *Exodus* 30:34–38. See Lightfoot, *The Temple* 85. Also consult Lee Samuel, *Orbis Miraculum or The Temple of Solomon pourtrayed by Scripture-Light* (London, John Streater: 1659; reprint Ann Arbor, MI: 1984) 260–74, 346. He states that the daily offerings of the priests were a type for the prayers offered to heaven and quotes *Romans* 12:11 on the intensity of prayer.

²⁸ Lee, *Orbis Miraculum* 267.

But from the rising of the sun, unto his going down shall
my name be great among the heathens and in every place
shall incense and a pure meat offering be brought unto my
Name.

The priest burning incense at the altar may also be related to the *Staten-bijbel's* interpretations of Malachi's 'messenger' (identified as St. John the Baptist), who will prepare the way for the Angel of the Covenant (interpreted as Christ), the hoped-for Messiah who shall come suddenly into the Temple (cf. *Malachi* 3:1 repeated in *Mark* 1:2). Within this context the priest in the etching may be identified as the priest Zacharias, who earlier in the Gospel narrative (*Mark* 1:11–19) sees a vision of the angel Gabriel in clouds of incense. The angel tells the priest that his future son, John the Baptist, will assume the role of Elias, the forerunner of the Messiah, and will lead the people to the Lord (Christ). This miraculous vision preceded Christ's own birth and circumcision, but the priest in this print may be contemplating the earlier revelation.²⁹

In other works situated within the Second Temple, Rembrandt juxtaposed the arrogance and wealth of the priesthood with the humility and poverty of Jesus and his apostles; and he paired Temple rituals devoted to the expiation of sin with the redemption brought by Christ as the new high priest, as conveyed in *Hebrews*. Many contemporary publications similarly compared Judaism with Christianity in order to argue the superiority of the Christian faith, as in Grotius's *Defensio fidei Catholicae* (*In Defense of the Christian Faith*) of 1617. Implicit within Rembrandt's religious images is the continuing dialogue between Hebraic Law and Christian Gospel, with Christianity prevailing over Judaism as the new religion.

A good case in point is Rembrandt's treatment of the Presentation in the Temple, a biblical narrative that preoccupied Rembrandt throughout his life [Fig. 1].³⁰ The event, told in *Luke* 2:22–40, derives from the Jewish requirement that firstborn sons be redeemed from the Temple priest. Mary and Joseph dutifully comply with this custom (just as they had done with the Circumcision), and the old and pious priest Simeon, who had been told that he would live to see the Messiah, recognizes the infant

²⁹ I am grateful to Professor Vernon K. Robbins of Emory University, Department of Religious Studies, who first suggested the priest was Zacharias.

³⁰ On Rembrandt's representations of the subject, consult Haverkamp-Begemann E., "Rembrandt's Simeon and the Christ Child", in *Rembrandt och hans tid: Människan I centrum/ Rembrandt and His Age: Focus on Man*, exh. cat. (Stockholm: National Museum: 1992–93) 31–40; and Stechow W., "Rembrandt's *Presentation in the Dark Manner*", *The Print Collector's Quarterly* 27 (1940) 364–79.

in his arms as the promised savior. Now, at last, he can die in peace. Simeon responds with a song of revelation and praise, the 'nunc dimittis' (*Luke 2:29*):

Now Lord, now lettest thou thy servant go in peace, according to thy Word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the Nations. A light for the enlightening of the Gentiles, and for the glory of thy people Israel.

Simeon humbly kneels on the ground as he sings the 'nunc dimittis' in the painting in The Hague. The Temple setting is the Court of Women, which may be established by consulting the Mishnah Middoth plan, published in a Latin translation of 1630 by the Leiden Professor Constantijn L'Empereur.³¹ The scene is as majestic as an opera set. The Women's Court is defined by a series of arches flanked by stately, fluted columns. The ornate beauty and impressive scale of these columns invoke Josephus's description in the *Jewish Wars* 5.5.2, which praises the 'very fine and large pillars' of the 'cloisters' in the Women's Court.³² Rembrandt had a copy of Josephus in his library and drew upon its descriptions for his images of the Temple, along with other sources.³³

Gold treasures enhance the richness of the setting. To the left of the staircase stands a large elaborate object that may be identified as one of the many treasure boxes (*corban*) placed within the cloister of the Women's Court, as described by John Lightfoot, who follows Maimonides in describing the receptacle which had a trumpet-like top, much like the bell of a musical instrument.³⁴ The box in Rembrandt's painting has a bell-like protuberance at the top that meets these descriptions; moreover, the position of the golden 'receptable' within the Women's Court accords with Josephus's account that the 'cloisters of the court turned

³¹ The plan is an insert without pagination in L'Empereur De Oppyck, *Maseket middot mittalmud bavli*.

³² Josephus Flavius, *Jewish Antiquities* 8, trans. J. Thackeray and R. Marcus (Cambridge, MA: 1934).

³³ The copy in Rembrandt's library was listed in the inventory of Rembrandt's possessions as 'A Flavius Josephus in German, illustrated by Tobias Stimmer' ('Een hoogduytsche Flavio fevus, gestoffeert met figuren van Tobias Timmermani'). See Golahny A., *Rembrandt's Reading. The Artist's Bookshelf of Ancient Poetry and History* (Amsterdam: 2003) 137–138, 164–165.

³⁴ See Godwyn Thomas, *Moses and Aaron and Ecclesiastical Rites* (London, Green Dragon and Crown: 1655) 65. The word in Hebrew is *shoperoth*. It has a trumpet-like top, which seems to be indicated in the painting. See Maimonides in Shekalim, per 2.

inward before the Treasuries' (*Wars* 2.9.4).³⁵ Lightfoot, who located the Temple treasures in the Women's Court, claimed that this was the place where Christ praised the meager offerings of a poor widow as a greater gift than the large donations given by a rich man (*Luke* 21:4).³⁶ The corban is also shown in Rembrandt's tiny print, *Presentation in the Temple* of 1630 [Fig. 4]. The etching also features the semi-circular staircase of the Court of Women of the Temple, where a priest presides over an atonement ceremony, foreshadowing Christ's role as the new high priest, as told in *Hebrews*.

Rembrandt's emphasis upon gold treasure in these works invokes the oft-quoted passage from *Haggai* 2:9–10 which derides the use of gold to please God:

Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold, saith
the Lord of hosts. The glory of this last house
shall become greater than the first [...]

God does not need gold and silver, only true devotion, the *Statenbijbel* states in the notes.

Rembrandt's painting in The Hague juxtaposes the brightly illuminated followers gathered about the infant with those who appeal for atonement before the enthroned priest in the murky shadows of the background. While the figures entreating the priest at the top of the staircase recall the Old Testament system of atonement and judgment, the golden pool of light enveloping the humble figures about Jesus invoke *Malachi* 4:2: 'To you, on the contrary, that fear my Name, shall the sun of righteousness arise'. The sun of righteousness, according to the *Statenbijbel* notes, is Jesus Christ. Calvin explained that the Temple was rebuilt after the return from Babylon to demonstrate the glory of the coming Christ: 'When God the Father appeared in the person of his only son, he then glorified indeed his Temple; and his majesty shone forth so much that there was nothing wanting to a complete perfection'.³⁷

³⁵ These places within the cloisters, used for the storage of treasures, were called *Gazophylacia*. Scholars were uncertain whether the treasure rooms were in the Court of Israel, or the Court of Women. See Busink T., *Der Tempel von Jerusalem von Salomo bis Herodes* 1, 2 (Leiden: 1980) 1098. See also Lightfoot, *The Temple* 110.

³⁶ The *Statenbijbel* annotations to *Luke* 21:4 explained that the alms of the wealthy were 'kept in the treasure chest'.

³⁷ Consult Calvin John, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* 3, trans. C.W. Bingham (Edinburgh: 1852) 174–175.



Fig. 4. Rembrandt, *The Presentation in the Temple*, 1630. Etching, 10.3 × 7.8 cm. (Bartsch 51). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Katherine E. Bullard Fund in Memory of Francis Bullard 2000.647. Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Gospel account of Christ's Presentation in the Temple celebrates the return of prophecy to the Temple with the advent of the Messiah. Both Simeon and the widow in the Temple, Hannah, experience revelation in Rembrandt's etching of 1630. Simeon, with the infant Jesus on his lap, occupies the apex of a pyramid that encompasses both Joseph and Mary. Here Rembrandt focuses on Simeon's prophecy to Christ's mother. Simeon's distressed expression and the somber mood of the woman in shadow both suggest his foreboding prophesy, as told in *Luke* 2:34–35:

[...] behold this child is set for a fall and resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against. And also a sword shall go through thine own soul that the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

Openly antagonistic to Simeon's revelation, the angry Pharisees at the right foreshadow the hostile future that awaits Mary and Jesus.

The aged widow of the Temple, Hannah, occupies the center of the composition, where she stares with bug-eyed amazement at the Christ Child. She will soon proclaim him as the Messiah after this revelation. The angel at her side peers into her face and speaks in her ear while gesturing towards Jesus with an elongated finger. Hannah cannot see the divine messenger, but his presence and message are known to her. The inclusion of the angel in this scene is unprecedented, but may be explained by *Malachi* 3:1: 'Behold, I send mine messenger who shall prepare the way before my face, and soon shall the Lord come unto his temple whom ye seek, to wit, the angel of the covenant in whom you delight; behold, he cometh [...]' The word in Hebrew for 'messenger', *mal'aki*, means 'angel'. Within this context, the angel in Rembrandt's print may be construed as the 'messenger' of God (like John the Baptist), who reveals the savior to Hannah.³⁸

When Rembrandt reprised the same biblical theme around 1654, he again evoked the return of glory to the Temple, but now within a much darker setting [Fig. 5]. An atmosphere of prophetic doom and mystery

³⁸ In Jewish ceremonies, such as the circumcision, the angel of the covenant (also known as Elijah) is presumed to be present. Elijah is viewed within Judaism as a forerunner of the Messiah. For a discussion of the angel of the covenant in Judaism, see Johann Buxtorf's well-known anti-Jewish treatise: Buxtorf Johann, *The Jewish synagogue, or, An historical narration of the state of the Jewes, at this day dispersed over the face of the whole earth*, trans. A.B. (London: T. Roycroft: 1663) 46–48, 51. The annotations to the *Statenbijbel* for *Haggai* 3:1 convey that the 'messenger' is John the Baptist, and the notes to *Malachi* 3:1 identify the 'messenger' in this text as John the Baptist, and the hoped-for 'angel of the Covenant' as Christ.



Fig. 5. Rembrandt, *The Presentation in the Temple* ("in the Dark Manner"), c. 1654. Etching, 20.9 × 16.2 cm. (Bartsch 50). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Harvey D. Parker Collection, P437. Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

pervades this print where Mary, Joseph, and even Hannah threaten to disappear into the darkness of the shadows. The space is confined, the composition limited to only a few figures. There are few details of the Temple to occupy our attention. The figures are the focus of attention.

The two main priests in this late *Presentation* etching are no longer separated from Jesus and Simeon, but are united to them. The most imposing figure is the majestic specter of the ceremonial high priest. Standing in a rigid, frontal pose denoting absolute authority, the priest lowers his head to stare at the infant. Rather than interacting with Mary and Joseph, Simeon sings the 'nunc dimittis' as he presents the infant to the priests.³⁹ Simeon's face shines with divine light radiating from the Child, whose face is partially encumbered by dark shadow, as he slumbers in ominous stillness, forecasting his sacrifice.

Like earlier interpretations of this subject by Rembrandt, this late etching portrays a Christian revelation within the Temple setting.⁴⁰ The Gospel text has Simeon declare Christ as 'a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel' (*Luke* 2:32). As discussed above, Rembrandt used light to contrast the Old and New Dispensations. In this late work, however, the darkness is more profound.

As indicated earlier, the return of prophecy (glory) to the Temple through the Messiah was repeatedly invoked by Christians to argue that Jesus was the promised savior of *Malachi* 3:1. Hannah, assisted by an angel reinforced Simeon's prophetic role in Rembrandt's earlier print of the Presentation [Fig. 4]. Nearly hidden in the shadows of the gallery at the right, the old prophetess in the late etching no longer plays a major role. Rather, the two priests in the print clarify and define the meaning of Simeon's revelation. Each priest seems to evince a different aspect of the Old Testament. The seated priest with the book embodies the Law, and the standing priest invokes the powers of prophetic vision. The standing priest may be identified as the *Cohen Haggadol*, because he wears a breastplate, referring to his privileged entrance into the Oracle on the Day of Atonement. The seated priest is his assistant, the Sagan.

The open book held by the Sagan underscores Jewish dependency upon text and the law, but this priest ignores the pages that glow within the

³⁹ Stechow, "Rembrandt's *Presentation*" 375–379, discussed the motif of Simeon kneeling before the priest in this etching. See Haverkamp-Begemann, "Rembrandt's Simeon and the Christ Child" 37, which notes that Simeon is offering Christ to the priest.

⁴⁰ Zell M., *Reframing Rembrandt. Jews and the Christian Image in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (Berkeley: 2002) 123.

book.⁴¹ In contrast to the priest who does not acknowledge the Christian meaning of the text, Simeon sees with an 'inner light', as he presents Christ to the priest in fulfillment of Jewish law and prophecy.

Dressed for the Day of Atonement, the *Cohen Haggadol* wears the most important element of his priestly attire, the 'breastplate of judgment', consisting of three rows of four stones (*Exodus* 28:17). *Exodus* relates that the stones of the Urim and Thummim were set within the breastplate 'that they may be upon the heart of Aaron, when he is to go in [to the Oracle] before the face of the Lord [...] (*Exodus* 28:30). The Urim and Thummim were used to communicate with the Lord when the *Cohen Haggadol* went into the Oracle.⁴² The Lord spoke to the priest by the play of light upon the gems. According to Christian interpretation, the stones of the breastplate that revealed God's mind 'did not shine in the Second Temple until the days of Christ', since the prophecy of the Urim and Thummim was a Prerogative missing from the Second Temple.⁴³ The breastplate in Rembrandt's print, however, is strongly illuminated, even in the darkest of impressions. It glows in the darkness and testifies to the restoration of prophecy in the Temple.

The golden plate of the high priest's turban is also aglow with intense light. As described in *Exodus* 28:36, this plate, attached to the headgear by two strings, bore the inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord'. The *Cohen Haggadol* in this print, like the priest in the *Circumcision* etching of 1630, is dressed for the Day of Atonement, when he alone entered the Holy of Holies to atone the people's sins with a blood offering. Perhaps Rembrandt was aware of the well-known belief, advocated by such luminaries as John Calvin, Joseph Scaliger, Hugh Broughton, Joseph Mede, and

⁴¹ Another print of the *Presentation in the Temple*, by Jacques de Bie, after Marten de Vos, shows Hannah with an open book on her lap (the Old Testament) handing over another opened book (the New Testament) to Christ. The open books in Rembrandt's etching and in Bie's engraving foreshadow the biblical episode when Jesus, preaching in the synagogue (*Luke* 4:17–21), took the book of Isaiah handed to him and opened it to read verse 61:1, the prophecy of the promised Messiah. Unlike the seated priest in Rembrandt's late etching, Christ in Luke's account and Hannah in the de Bie print open the books to the 'right' pages, thus recognizing the true Christological implications of the text. According to Luke, when Jesus completed the reading, he shut the book, returned it to the leader of the synagogue and said, 'Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears' (*Luke* 4:20).

⁴² Pennington Isaac, *Outward Jew* (London, printed by G.D. for Lodowick Lloyd: 1659) 167.

⁴³ See Lee, *Orbis Miraculum* 313. Weemse, *Christian Synagogue* 109, conveyed that the Urim and Thummim were in the First Temple, but the gift of prophecy was lost in the Second. Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.6.4) claimed the prophecy of the Urim and Thummim ceased after the death of the high priest John Hyrcanus of the Maccabees.

others, that Christ was born in September, rather than December.⁴⁴ This dating would mean that the Presentation of Christ in the Temple could coincide with the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

The *Cohen Haggadol* in the late etching wields a large, mysterious staff, which writhes with amorphous, organic life, sprouting ball-like forms resembling buds and nuts. This strange, chimerical object evinces Aaron's blossoming rod that was stored within the Temple Oracle.⁴⁵ The history of Aaron's staff, told in *Numbers* 17:8, relates that when Moses went into the 'Tent of the Testimony', he discovered that Aaron's rod had blossomed, 'for it brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms, and bore almonds'. Thereafter Aaron's miraculous staff was kept in the Ark of the Covenant until it was lost in the destruction of Solomon's Temple (*Hebrews* 9:4). According to Christian legend, the miraculous rod was hidden in Jerusalem until the birth of Jesus.⁴⁶ Jewish Midrashic sources predict that the lost staff will reappear with the Messiah's arrival and serve as his kingly scepter.⁴⁷ The miracle of the rod was a topic of conversation in the seventeenth century. John Weemse bemoaned that the Jews believed in the blossoming of Aaron's rod, yet still had no faith in the Virgin birth and denied Christ as king, priest, and prophet.⁴⁸

The invocation of Aaron's miraculous staff in Rembrandt's etching nonetheless adumbrates the 'glory' restored by the Christian savior in the Temple in fulfillment of *Haggai* 2:10. Aaron's rod also presages Christ's future ascendancy as the heavenly High Priest, who wields the scepter 'at the right hand of God' (cf. *Hebrews* 10:12). The bell hanging from this

⁴⁴ An important source on this subject which references famous biblical scholars is Mocket Thomas, *Christmas, the Christians Grand Feast: its original, growth, and observation, also of Easter, Whitsontide, and other holydayes modestly discussed and determined. Also the beginning of the yeare, and other things observable. Where also among other learned men, you have the judgment of those eminent men; Josephus Scaliger, Rodolphus Hospinian, Matthæus Beroaldus, Joh. Causabon, Doct. Fulk, M. Cartwright, Alsted, Hugh Broughton, Master Mead* (London, Richard Wodenoth at the Star: 1651). See also Lee, *Orbis Miraculum* 323, and Mede Joseph, *The works of the pious and profoundly-learned Joseph Mede, B.D., sometime fellow of Christ's Colledge in Cambridge* (London, R. Norton for Roger Norton, 1672) 265–266.

⁴⁵ Lee, *Orbis Miraculum*, 264.

⁴⁶ Solomon of Basraj, *Book of the Bee*, Anecdota Oxoniensia, Semitic Series, 1, part 2 (Oxford: 1886). For more on the rod, consult Clement of Alexandria, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians", in *The Apostolic Fathers* 1, trans. K. Lake (London: 1914) no. 43, 80–83.

⁴⁷ See McCurdy J.F. and Ginzberg L, "Aaron's Rod", in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. C. Adler et al. (New York and London : 1901–1906); www.jewishencyclopedia.com/.

⁴⁸ Weemse, *A Treatise of the Foure Degenerate Sonnes* 314.

mysterious rod most likely performed the same function as the small bells on the priest's cloak that made a sound when Aaron entered 'the Holy (Place) before the face of the Lord . . . that he die not [be smitten] (*Exodus* 29:35)'.⁴⁹

Indeed, the prophecies of *Haggai* (2:7–10) and *Malachi* (3:1–3), along with the commentaries on the prophets by Calvin, Grotius, and the *Staten-bijbel*, are of prime importance to Rembrandt's images of the infancy of Christ in the Temple, which reveal Jesus as the promised Messiah, who fulfilled Hebraic prophecy, and restored the past glory of the Jerusalem Temple.

⁴⁹ Zell, *Reframing Rembrandt* 121–22, points out the detail of the bell, but associates it with a Torah crown without giving an example. The rod does not resemble a torah crown.

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V. VISUAL INFLECTIONS OF TEXTUAL AUTHORITY

SAINTS AMIDST THE INFERNO:
HUMANISM IN WITTENBERG'S PRE-REFORMATION ART:
A NEW EXEGESIS OF DÜRER'S *MARTYRDOM OF THE TEN THOUSAND*

Birgit Ulrike Münch

The *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, painted by Albrecht Dürer in 1506 on behalf of German merchants residing in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi next to Rialto Bridge and intended for the church of San Bartolomeo, is widely seen as his most Venetian painting.¹ This notion is based mainly on Dürer's following Bellini's canonical form of the *Sacra Conversazione*, including putti holding a baldacchino or the angel 'alla maniera italiana'.

Joachim von Sandrart gave a relatively detailed report describing the acquisition of Dürer's painting by emperor Rudolph II.² The negotiations prior to buying the painting were conducted mainly by the imperial ambassador in Venice, Thomas Perrenot de Granvelle, Count Cantecroy.³ It is possible that Cantecroy also owed the lucrative post as ambassador to the emperor's tremendous ardor for Dürer's art. Cantecroy, who later fell out of favor with Rudolph, had inherited an art collection from his uncle, the late cardinal Perrenot de Granvelle, which included, apart from several of Dürer's paintings, works by Raphael, Titian, Giambologna, Leone

¹ Oil on panel, 16.2 × 19.4 cm, 1506, Prague Národní Galerie, inv.-no. O.P. 2148; Kotková O. (ed.), *Albrecht Dürer. The Feast of the Rose Garlands, 1506–2006* (Prague: 2006) 9–67; Luber K.C., *Albrecht Dürer and the Venetian Renaissance*, Cambridge 2005; Lübbecke I., "Desgleichen ich noch nie gemacht hab", in Brinkmann B. – Krohm H. (eds.), *Aus Albrecht Dürers Welt* (Turnhout: 2001) 99–101; Morrall A., "Dürer and Venice", in Silver L. – Chipps Smith J. (eds.), *The Essential Dürer* (Philadelphia: 2010) 99–114, points out that Dürer himself referred to the commission as 'the German picture'. It is possible that the Fugger family was instrumental in its commission; see esp. p. 108. My special thanks go to Dr. Thomas Schauerte (Nuremberg) and also to Prof. Dr. Jürgen Müller (Dresden) for their close reading of parts of my paper at an early stage.

² Sandrart, Joachim von, *Teutsche Akademie* (Nuremberg, Johann-Philipp Miltenberger: 1675) 223; Anzelewsky F., *Dürer. Werk und Wirkung* (Fribourg-Stuttgart: 1980) 126–130.

³ For all relevant contemporary sources and literature concerning Rudolph II's art dealings in Venice and Cantecroy, see: Niederkorn J.P., "Kaiser Rudolf II., ein krimineller Botschafter und Dürers Marter der zehntausend Christen", *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* (2008) 128–139, esp. 130–134.

Leoni and Michelangelo.⁴ The post as ambassador had possibly been part of the emperor's pay for those pieces in the art collection that Rudolph II desired to possess at any cost.

Amongst these pieces is another work by Albrecht Dürer, which stands at the centre of my analysis: *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* from 1508 [Fig. 1].⁵ The painting had originally been ordered by Frederick the Wise for the newly erected palace church in Wittenberg. At a later time Frederick's nephew, John Frederick of Saxony, presented it as a gift to Granvelle in Brussels. Unlike the *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, this painting has often been neglected by research in art history.⁶ Causative for this neglect may have been the depiction of the cruelty and the naked dying flesh of the martyrs, which has often been described as too offensive for common taste, as well as the rarity and complexity of the painting's subject.⁷ However, Sandrart shows a somewhat higher opinion of the painting, when he writes in 1675 that 'the torments of stoning, slaying and the like were exceedingly beautiful and shapely'.⁸

In what follows, I would like to take up some questions that have been raised by previous research regarding the painting as well as to pose some new questions regarding its iconography, its patron and its function. In

⁴ Dinard S.-P., "La collection du cardinal Antoine de Granvelle (1517 – 1586): l'inventaire du palais Granvelle de 1607", in Lemerle F. – Pauwels, Y. – Toscano, G. (eds.), *Les cardinaux de la Renaissance et la modernité artistique* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: 2009) 157–168.

⁵ Oil on canvas, 99 × 87 cm, 1508, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv.-no. GG 835. My thanks to Dr. Christof Metzger (Vienna) for helping me out with some detailed images of the *Martyrdom*.

⁶ There exist only a few texts and articles which deal with the iconography of the *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, see e.g.: Panofsky E., "Conrad Celtis and Kunz von der Rosen: Two Problems in Portrait Identification", *Art Bulletin* 24 (1942) 39–54; Anzelewsky F., *Albrecht Dürer. Das malerische Werk*, 2 vols. (Berlin: 1971) I 75–77, 216–221; Benesch O., *Collected Writings*, 4 vols. (New York: 1972) III 314–319; Stöcker C., "Dürer, Celtis und der falsche Bischof Achatius: zur Ikonographie von Dürers Marter der Zehntausend", *Artibus et historiae* 5 (1984) 121–137; Wuttke D., "Dürer und Celtis. Von der Bedeutung des Jahres 1500 für den deutschen Humanismus. Jahrhundertfeier als symbolische Form", *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 10 (1980) 73–129, esp. 116–117; Niederkorn, "Kaiser Rudolf II.". Gumbel's article of 1926 can be seen as a text rich with problems, since the author interprets the scene as an ironic revenge (sic!) for Degenhart's costiveness; see Gumbel A., *Der kursächsische Kämmerer Degenhart von Pfäffingen, der Begleiter Dürers in der Marter der Zehntausend Christen* (Strasbourg 1926) 38–44.

⁷ Wölfflin H., *Die Kunst Albrecht Dürers* (Munich: 1905) 192–195; Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer* I 217, 220.

⁸ Sandrart, *Teutsche Akademie* 224: 'in dem Jahr 1508. hat er ein Crucifix oder Kreutziung Christi gefärtiget/ und viel andere Marterungen/ von Steinigen / Todschlagen und dergleichen/ über die massen schön und wolständig. In dieses Stuck hat er sich selbst nach dem Leben gemahlet'.



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 17] Albrecht Dürer, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1508). Oil on canvas, 99 × 87 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie.

my opinion, some of the painting's most crucial details have wrongly not been taken into account until now. Furthermore, I must begin by mentioning that in my eyes *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, which took Dürer over a year to create, contains different citation levels that are mutually dependent. I am going to show that some details even can and must be interpreted on different levels, because the painting makes greater demands on the viewer than one would suppose at first glance. Moreover, the painting is an extremely revealing fragment of cultural

transfer between Wittenberg and Italy, an example for Northern and Italian 'Kreislaufvorgänge', a term and concept coined by Aby Warburg.⁹ The underestimation of certain details and elements in art historical research resulted, in my opinion, mainly from the religious-political point of view of Prussian cultural Protestantism of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

The Legend of the Ten Thousand Compared with Its Artistic Adaptation

Confusion starts with the quest for an authoritative iconographic pattern for the martyrdom of the ten thousand Christians. There exists no authoritative version of the underlying legend; rather there are some lines of tradition differing heavily from each other. Remarkably, the legend was not incorporated into the large majority of medieval versions of the *Legenda Aurea*. The legend originated in the twelfth century as an incentive for crusaders and was formed after the hagiographical prototype of the Theban Legion:¹¹ the heathen prince Agathius, fighting for the Roman emperors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius in Asia Minor, and his nine thousand warriors converted to Christianity. When he refused to forswear his new faith, the emperors had him and all his fellows cruelly tortured and put to death. The excruciation and execution of the converts were performed by another heathen army led by Sapor. Among this army, another one thousand warriors converted to Christianity in an act of 'imitatio Passionis' and were subsequently also tortured to death, thereby completing the number of ten thousand martyrs.

The Latin version in the *Acta Sanctorum* emphasizes the imitatio Christi: 'si digni fuerimus expiari talibus tormentis, quia merebimur communicare passionibus Christi', that the martyrs where crucified 'simili

⁹ Warburg A., "Die antike Götterwelt und die Frührenaissance in Süden und Norden", in Bredekamp H. – Diers M. (eds.), *Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike. Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance*, Gesammelte Schriften 1.2 (Berlin: 1998) 451–454.

¹⁰ Concerning the Protestant inauguration of Wittenberg castle church and the obliteration of its Catholic years, see: Laube S., "Der Kult um die Dinge an einem evangelischen Erinnerungsort", in Laube S. – Fix K.-H. (eds.), *Lutherinszenierung und Reformationserinnerung*, Schriften der Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt 2 (Leipzig: 2002) 11–34, esp. 14–16. Regarding the problem of categories for 'typical' Protestant or Catholic art see: Münch B.U., *Geteiltes Leid. Die Passion Christi in Bildern und Texten der Konfessionalisierung* (Regensburg: 2009) 14–23.

¹¹ O'Reilly D.F., "The Theban Legion of St. Maurice", *Vigiliae Christianae* 32.3 (1978) 195–207.

modo praecipimus, ut hi scelesti patiantur eamdem poenam', and that they were also adorned with crowns of thorns: 'et ponebant sinulis coronas in capitibus eorum'.¹²

Some traditions of the legend – though not the Latin text of the *Acta Sanctorum* – also mention that the martyrs were thrown into thorny brushwood: *Si wuerden iemerleich geschrenchet, /vber ein ander geschrenchet*, as verses 369–370 of a Bavarian version of the 1360s recount.¹³ This textual image became popular and gave Agathius his attributes: branches or sometimes a crown of thorns, as in, for example, the drawing by the Master of 1483,¹⁴ and the Pulkau altarpiece of 1515.¹⁵ This dramatic scene is shown in the majority of the illustrations of the legend, such as the altarpiece of 1330 in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, and an Alsatian *Legenda Aurea* preserved in a Codex Palatinus Germanicus of 1419.¹⁶ The enormous number of persons actively involved in the legend distinguishes this iconography from most other hagiographical subjects.

Dürer treated the topic three times: first in a woodcut, datable roughly to between 1496 and 1498 [Fig. 2].¹⁷ Undated but possibly created after his return from Venice to Nuremberg was a draft design drawing, which exists

¹² *Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur. Junii Tomus Quintus*, ed. G. Henschenius – D. Papebrochius (Paris-Rome: 1867) 151–162, here 159, 161: 'Adrianus vero furia succensus dixit sanctis: "Testor omnes deos meos, quoniam non effugietis manus meas: et quia vos cuncta creditis Christo, procul dubio illius sustinebitis poenas." Unus autem ex collegio sanctorum Pharetrius nomine, campiductor, respondit: "Beati erimus, si digni fuerimus expiari talibus tormentis, quia merebimur communicare passionibus Christi." [...] Turbatus caesar Maximianus a constantia sanctorum dixit ministris: "Audivi de Christo crucifixo, quem isti vocant Deum, quia capite gestavit spineam coronam et quia latus ejus lancea, vel ut alii volunt asseverare, calamo fuerit apertum: simili modo praecipimus, ut hi scelesti patiantur eamdem poenam." [...] Tenentes itaque in manibus acutissimos calamos, aperiebant latera sanctorum, et ponebant singulis coronas in capitibus eorum. Postea tulerunt dena millia virorum et bis per universam civitatem verberantes illos flagris et nimiis injuriis'.

¹³ Zatocil L., *Germanistische Studien und Texte. Vol. 1: Beiträge zur deutschen und niederländischen Philologie des Spätmittelalters* (Brno: 1968) 170–179.

¹⁴ Master of 1483, *Agathius, Blasius, Leonhard and Antonius Eremita*, drawing, Erlangen, University Library.

¹⁵ Anonymous, detail of Agathius, altarpiece, Church of the Precious Blood of Our Lord, Pulkau, Austria, 1515.

¹⁶ Anonymous, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, Cologne, 1330, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum; Alsatian *Legenda aurea*, 1419, University Library Heidelberg, cpg 144, fol. 307r.

¹⁷ Albrecht Dürer, *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, woodcut, 38 × 24.8 cm, 1496–1498; Meder J., *Dürer-Katalog. Ein Handbuch über Albrecht Dürers Stiche, Radierungen, Holzschnitte, deren Zustände, Ausgaben und Wasserzeichen* (Vienna: 1932) 218; Schoch R. – Mende M. – Scherbaum A., *Albrecht Dürer. Das druckgraphische Werk. Vol. 2: Holzschnitte und Holschnittfolgen* (Munich – Berlin – London – New York: 2002) cat. no. 104, 41–44.



Fig. 2. Albrecht Dürer, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1496–1498). Woodcut, 38 × 24.8 cm.

only in copied form at Vienna's Albertina.¹⁸ The painting's format follows the woodcut and not the drawing, some details being reproduced mirror-inverted. Unlike the few older depictions of the ten thousand martyrs, which mostly concentrate on the characteristic martyrdom of piercing by thorns, Dürer's painting illustrates the varying methods of torture known from the legend's textual sources: whilst the left side of the foreground is dominated by crucifixions and crowning with thorns, the other side also shows decapitations and the smashing of bones. In the center, a succession of almost naked martyrs is forced by whiplashes to ascend a forested ledge from which they are thrown into the thorny brushwood. The martyrs are arranged into a circular formation leading to a double portrait of Dürer and his friend, the humanist Conrad Celtes [Fig. 3].

Amidst the legendary personages, a bishop named Hermelaus baptizes the newly converted Christians, one of the Roman emperors sits on horseback, and Sapor in Ottoman garb in the foreground gestures toward the martyrs. Agathius has not been recognized until now, but the hint found in some texts that as part of his martyrdom he was first blinded and afterwards killed leads me to the conclusion that he is shown prominently in the foreground: the kneeling figure with hands tied behind his back is reminiscent of various Italian depictions of the Binding of Isaac. The crucified figures to the far left are comparable to the two thieves depicted in numerous prints and drawings by Dürer.¹⁹ In fact, far more interesting are those elements of the painting in which Dürer clearly shows himself to have been influenced by Northern Italian painting, as can be demonstrated through direct comparison with his woodcut on the same subject. Much as he decided to show within his painting all the different tortures mentioned in different versions of the legend – and not only the fall into the brushwood – he was also willing to present an image as exegetical instrument, which has to be read on different levels. One level is his rapprochement to Venetian art – an aspect of the work that has never been emphasized.

¹⁸ Copy after Albrecht Dürer, *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, drawing, pen and ink, 27.4 × 42.8 cm, 1507–1508, Vienna, Albertina, 3108, D. 84; from the collections of Crozat, Ticino, the Imperial Collection, and Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen; W 438; for an illustration, see: Strauss W.L., *The Complete Drawings of Albrecht Dürer. Vol. 2: 1500–1509* (New York: 1974) 1000–1001.

¹⁹ E.g., the unrepentant thief in the drawing for the *Ober St. Veith Altarpiece*, 1505, Vienna, Albertina.

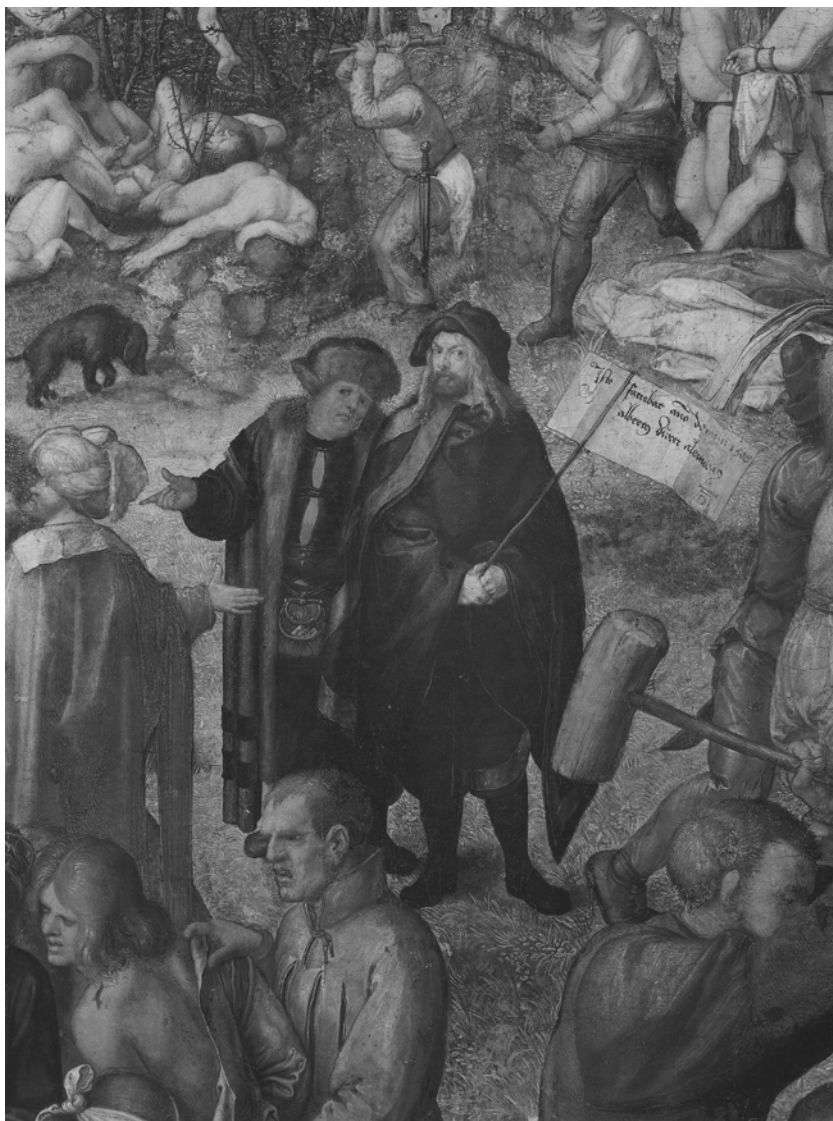


Fig. 3. Albrecht Dürer, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1508). Oil on canvas, 99 × 87 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie. Detail, center of the painting, with Dürer and Celtes.

Bellini, Carpaccio, Mantegna, and Dürer's Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand

Whereas the clothing of the Turks depicted in the woodcut remained an unspecified reference to 'the other' in general, the painting shows details that point to an exhaustive examination of the images of Turks known from Venice – for example from Bellini's workshop.²⁰ This becomes especially apparent in the clothing of the figure in the foreground, as well as in the mounted Ottoman figure. The rendering of the whinnying horse and the decoration of its harness can also be found in the works of Italian artists such as Mantegna.²¹ On the other hand, the cap worn by the Turkish warriors can be found frequently as a woollen 'Ottoman cap' in paintings by Vittore Carpaccio [Fig. 4].²²

The signature of the *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* is written on a *cartellino*, which is fixed to a wooden branch and reads as follows: 'Iste faciebat anno Domini 1508 / Albertus Dürer alemanus AD'. While Dürer's self-portrait in other paintings is shown in the background and sometimes later added,²³ here it is right in the center of the painting. Together with Celtes he comments on the setting; he is an eye-witness and not only a silent viewer. A visual comparison for this folded *cartellino* can be found in several Venetian paintings around 1500. I mention only Carpaccio's *Consecration of St. Stephen*, *The Pilgrims Meet Pope Cyriacus* from 1492, and *The Return of the English Ambassadors*, which is dated around 1495 [Fig. 5].²⁴ Within Dürer's oeuvre, the Italian *cartellino* affixed to a branch appears only in the *Martyrdom*. In other cases, Dürer shows his signature in combination with a self-portrait in the form of a tablet which he presents to

²⁰ E.g., Gentile Bellini, *Portrait of Mehmed II*, oil on canvas, 1480, 70 × 52 cm, London, National Gallery; Gentile Bellini, *Procession in Piazza San Marco*, 1496, tempera and oil on canvas, 36.7 × 74.5 cm, Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice, with three Ottomans in the background.

²¹ E.g., illustrations of horses at the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua by Andrea Mantegna, Camera degli Sposi, fresco, eastern wall, 1472.

²² E.g., the musicians in Vittore Carpaccio, *Baptism of the Selenites*, oil on canvas, 14.1 × 28.5 cm; Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

²³ Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer II*, pls. 91, 96 (*Feast of the Rose Garlands*), and pls. 130, 138 (*Landau Altar*). On the concept of the artist's 'eye-witnessing', see: Yiu Y., "Der Maler als Zeuge. Strategien der Wahrheitsbezeugung in der Malerei des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit", in Drews W. – Schlie H. (eds.), *Zeugnis und Zeugenschaft. Perspektiven der Vormoderne* (Munich: 2011) 254–260; Koerner J.L., *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago-London: 1993) 112.

²⁴ Vittore Carpaccio, *The Return of the English Ambassadors*, oil on canvas, 2.97 × 5.27 m, Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice, see: Sgarbi V., *Carpaccio* (New York-London-Paris: 1995) 88–89.



Fig. 4. Vittore Carpaccio, *Baptism of the Selenites* (1507). Oil on canvas, 14.1 × 28.5 cm. Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. Detail, left part of the painting.



Fig. 5. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Return of the English Ambassadors* (ca. 1495). Oil on canvas, 297 × 527 cm. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia.

the viewer, as can be seen in the Heller Altarpiece or the so-called Landau Altar of 1511. The cartellino in the *Martyrdom* painting is undoubtedly an Italian citation. The wooden branch holding the cartellino reminds one of a so-called *Briefvogel* – a letter-bird – a medieval instrument ambassadors used to deliver letters without touching them. In the famous *Weisskünig* of 1515 with illustrations from Burgkmair and others, folio 109 shows such a Briefvogel [Fig. 6].²⁵ Another detail reminds the viewer of Italian images: one of the martyrs at the center of Dürer's *Martyrdom* woodcut – his body presented frontally, in a contrapposto stance, nude but for a loincloth; his hands bound behind his back – is borrowed from a type of St. Sebastian occurring in works by artists such as Perugino, Antonello da Messina and Mantegna.²⁶

Another example for Italian adaptations can be found in a detail of the painting also never mentioned before: the small child at the lower right [Fig. 7]. It is led by a soldier dressed in red and green with a red woollen

²⁵ Hans Burgkmair, *Weisskünig*, 1515, fol. 109, signed HB, see facsimile: *Der Weiss Kunig. Eine Erzählung von den Thaten Kaiser Maximilian des Ersten*, ed. M. Treißsaurwein (Vienna: 1775) 212. Thanks to Stefan Heinz (Trier) for providing me with an image.

²⁶ E.g., Pietro Perugino, *St. Sebastian*, 1495, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

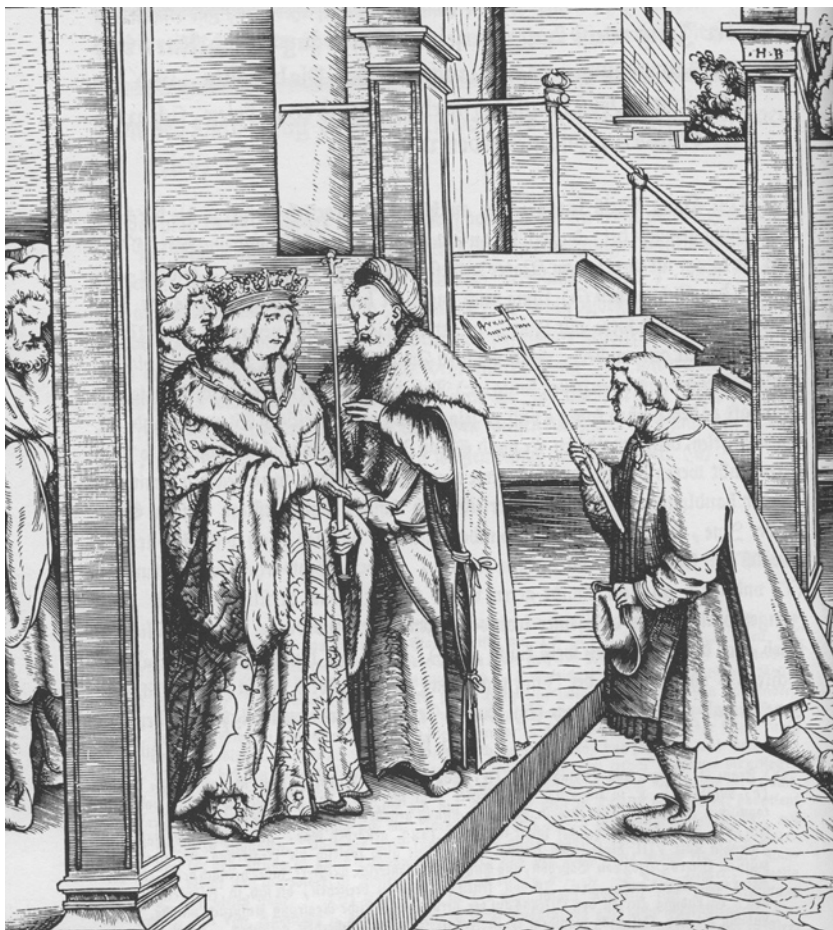


Fig. 6. Hans Burgkmair, *Weisskunig* (1515), woodcut illustration to the facsimile, *Der Weisskunig. Eine Erzählung von den Thaten Kaiser Maximilian des Ersten*, ed. M. Treißsaurwein (Vienna: 1775) 212, fol. 109.

cap on his head. Another man dressed in the same way is meanwhile lashing the martyrs on their way to Mount Ararat. A comparable child cannot be found in any of Dürer's paintings. Children often appear in the *Ecce homo* scene of his printed Passion cycles, as is the case also in his *Green Passion*, in which a child makes a vulgar gesture with his hands held toward Christ.²⁷ Here, as in some other late medieval paintings,

²⁷ Albrecht Dürer, *Ecce homo*, *Green Passion*, 1504, pen drawing on green primed paper, 29.1 × 18.3 cm, Vienna, Albertina.



Fig. 7. Albrecht Dürer, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1508). Oil on canvas, 99 × 87 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie. Detail, lower right part of the painting, with the soldier and the child.

the child expresses the mainstream character of the assaults against Christ. Conversely, Dürer's child in the *Martyrdom* painting looks at the viewer in a friendly way. In Italian examples, children appear even with similar clothes, with gathered cloth or two belts, in the oeuvre of Bellini and Mantegna, for example as a detail in Mantegna's *Circumcision* in the triptych in the Uffizi in Florence [Fig. 8].²⁸ The question has to be raised whether the child in Dürer's *Martyrdom* only connects the painting with the viewer or whether there are also other possible interpretations. In any case, the blond child stands next to the enemies of Christianity dressed in Ottoman garb, one of whom holds him by the arm. On various occasions,

²⁸ Andrea Mantegna, *Circumcision of Christ*, 1470, panel, probably from the chapel of the Castello di San Giorgio in Mantua; see: Greenstein J.M., *Mantegna and Painting as Historical Narrative* (Chicago – London: 1992) 181–222. The boy in Mantegna's painting plays an important role since he holds a broken ring near his own penis, which could represent the end of the old covenant of circumcision.



Fig. 8. Andrea Mantegna, *Circumcision of Christ*, probably from the chapel of the Castello di San Giorgio in Mantova (1470). Panel, 86 × 43 cm. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

the visualization of the Turks in the *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* has been interpreted as portraying the imminent danger of Ottoman power, though only in the genuine rendition of Ottoman costumes or the fact that Frederick the Wise wanted to keep alive the idea of the crusades after his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.²⁹ Following the insight that the *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* equates the old enemies of the Christians with the new ones, the Turks,³⁰ there are more possible interpretations for the child: in many single-leaf woodcuts and broadsheets from the beginning of the sixteenth century, there appears an anti-Turkish convention, the alleged kidnapping of Christian children.³¹ From 1438 onwards, the janissaries, members of an elite military unit of the Turkish army, systematically recruited young boys from conquered Christian countries and forced them to convert to Islam.³²

Another negative image of the Turks can also be found in the figure of the dog next to Celtes [Fig. 9]. According to many proclamations of the imperial diets as well as to contemporary polemic at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Turks were often described as black dogs eager to drink Christian blood – ‘effusio sanguinis Christiani’.³³ Corresponding to those stereotypes, the black dog in Dürer’s painting licks up the blood of the dead martyrs. The decapitation in the foreground could also be understood as a ‘typical’ form of Turkish execution as it is described by many written sources and as it has appeared in several images, for example, the famous tapestry series of the conquest of Tunis by Charles V.³⁴

Dürer also aimed to demonstrate that he had mastered the theory of proportion, with which he became acquainted in Italy. In 1505 Johannes Viator (that is, Jean Pélerin) published his book *De Artificiali Perspectiva*

²⁹ Ludolph I., *Friedrich der Weise. Kurfürst von Sachsen 1463–1525* (Göttingen: 1984) 355–356.

³⁰ Fuchs F., *Osmanische Expansion und europäischer Humanismus*, Pirkheimer Jahrbuch zur Renaissance- und Humanismusforschung 20 (Wiesbaden: 2005); Höfert A., *Den Feind beschreiben. Türkengefahr und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600*, Campus Historische Studien 35 (Frankfurt /M. 2003) 76–78.

³¹ E.g., Hans Guldenmund, *Ottoman Warrior and Captured Peasants with a Dead Child*, woodcut, 1529.

³² Goodwin G., *The Janissaries* (London: 2006) 34–76.

³³ E.g., a polemical woodcut of a bath scene with Turks as black dogs: “*Tuerkisches Schweißbad oder Vorstellung der Großen Angst*”, copper engraving, 1686, 40.8 × 26.4 cm, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz YA 11347; see Harms W. – Paas J.R. – Schilling M. – Wang A. (eds.), *Illustrierte Flugblätter des Barock. Eine Auswahl*, Deutsche Neudrucke/Reihe Barock 30 (Tübingen: 1983) 145.

³⁴ Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen – Wilhelm de Pannemaker, *Tunisian Campaign of Charles V*, tapestry cycle, 1548–1554.



Fig. 9. Albrecht Dürer, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1508). Oil on canvas, 99 × 87 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie. Detail, left center of the painting, with the dog licking blood.

and described the relationship between size and distance: 'Les quantitez et les distances ont concordables differences'.³⁵ The book was printed with several woodcuts and reprinted in Nuremberg in 1509.³⁶ Viator took over Dürer's scheme of construction, and Dürer probably knew the text before it was published while he worked on the *Martyrdom*. The figures in the fore-, middle- and background at Mount Ararat are drawn in correct proportion of 1:2 to one another.

Dürer – Dante, Celtes – Virgil: Humanism in Wittenberg

It should have become obvious by now that Dürer created a highly ambitious composition that is also related to its patron and its place of presentation. Frederick the Wise adorned Wittenberg with the triad castle, castle church and university in his aim to establish a humanist center in Northern Europe. He also recruited the Italian painter Jacopo de' Barbari and the Italian jurispudent Petrus Ravenna.³⁷ The elector fulfilled this

³⁵ Cited from the end of the French text of Pélerin Jean, *De Artificiali Perspectiva* (Toul, P. Jacques: 1509).

³⁶ Wölfflin, *Die Kunst Albrecht Dürers* 196; Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer* I 217.

³⁷ Ferrara S., "Dürer e Jacopo de' Barbari. Persistenza di un rapporto", in Hermann Fiore C. – Ebert-Schifferer S. (eds.), *Dürer, l'Italia et l'Europa*, Studie della Bibliotheca Hertziana 6 (Milan: 2011) 39–46; Böckem B., "Jacopo de' Barbari. Ein Apelles am Fürstenhof? Die Allianz von Künstler, Humanist und Herrscher im Alten Reich", in Müller M. –

aspiration by creating a mythological and Christian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.³⁸ Unfortunately, only fragments still exist today, such as Dürer's *Hercules and the Stymphalian Birds*.

The *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* was shown in the castle church dedicated to All Saints [Fig. 10]. After the founding of Wittenberg University in 1502, the church also became an academic 'temple' where lectures were held, and it was also the place for the Wittenberg relics collection. This collection of Frederick the Wise cannot be classified as a late medieval, old-fashioned survival within the early Reformation era but has to be interpreted politically as Stephan Laube, among others, has emphasized.³⁹ Collecting things underlined Frederick's craving for recognition in the Holy Roman Empire and can be seen as an early example of the cabinet of curiosities. His collection – 19,013 holy pieces could be counted in 1520 – fulfilled humanist requirements, as it was classified encyclopaedically.⁴⁰ Scholars such as Heiner Borggreffe often emphasize that the relics of Saint Agathius and the ten thousand martyrs were the most important pieces of the collection, and therefore Frederick must have commissioned Dürer's painting. The Wittenberg *Heiltumsbuch* of 1509 mentions on folio 17r an 'obergult kast mit vielen mermelstein', a gold-plated box with many jewels holding 23 relics of the ten thousand martyrs as well as three particles of Agathius in another reliquary [Fig. 11].

However, the most important relics were, of course, those of Jesus Christ: particles of the 'arma Christi' (the instruments of the Passion), from Christ's beard and, above all, from the Holy Cross and a thorn of

Weschenfelder K. – Böckem B. – Hansmann R. (eds.), *Apelles am Fürstenhof. Facetten der Hofkunst um 1500 im Alten Reich* (Coburg: 2010) 23–34, esp. 27–30; Levenson J.A., *Jacopo de' Barbari and Northern Art of the Early Sixteenth Century* (New York: 1978); Bruck R., *Friedrich der Weise als Förderer der Kunst* (Strasbourg: 1903).

³⁸ Borggreffe H., "Die Bildausstattung des Wittenberger Schlosses. Friedrich der Weise, Albrecht Dürer und die Entstehung einer mythologisch-höfischen Malerei nach italienischem Vorbild", in Borggreffe H. – Uppenkamp B. (eds.), *Kunst und Repräsentation. Materialien zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte in Nord- und Westdeutschland* 29 (Lemgo: 2002) 9–68.

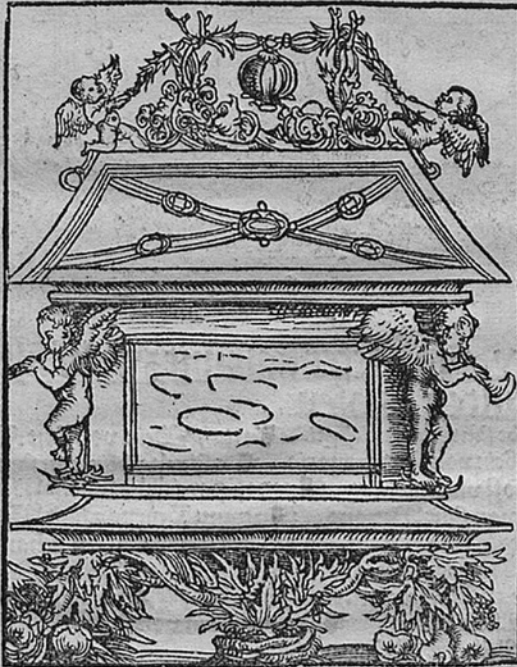
³⁹ Laube S., "Zwischen Hybris und Hybridität. Kurfürst Friedrich der Weise und seine Reliquiensammlung", in Tacke A. (ed.), *Ich armer sundiger mensch. Heiligen- und Reliquienkult am Übergang zum konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Halle: 2006) 170–207; Merkel K., "Die Reliquien von Halle und Wittenberg. Ihre Heiltumsbücher und Inszenierung", in Tacke A. (ed.), *Cranach: Meisterwerke auf Vorrat. Die Erlanger Handzeichnungen in der Universitätsbibliothek* (Erlangen: 1994) 37–50.

⁴⁰ Klein H.A., "Sacred Things and Holy Bodies. Collecting Relics from Late Antiquity to the Early Renaissance", in Bagnoli M. – Klein H.A. – Griffith Mann C. – Robinson J. (eds.), *Treasures from Heaven. Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London: 2011) 62–67.



Fig. 10. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Wittenberg Palace Church*, woodcut illustration to the *Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch* (1509).

Von sant Peregrino Othmaro vnd Liberto vier partickel
 Von sant Cassiano zwey pückel Ein groß pückel von sant Simplicio
 Ritter vnd merterer Von den Römischen Ritteren Simplicio
 Faustino processo vnd Martiniano vier pückel Von sant Faustino
 ein groß pückel Von sant Simplicio Faustino vñ Beatrix. iij. pte.
 Vñ sant Notho ein vatter sant Ursula. ij. p. Von sant Panthalone
 zwey par. Vñ sant Simplicio vñ Faustino ij. p. **Sūma. xxxvij. p.**



Sūm. iij. Ein groß ybergult kast mit viel
 mermelstein **Swey ganz gebeyn von den .x. Tausent Ritteren**
 Von den Zehen tausent Ritteren. xxij. partickel **Auf der gesellschaft**
 der heiligen Aurej vnd Justine. xij. partickel **Ein ganz haupt auß d**
 gesellschaft Aurej vnd Justine **Auf der gesellschaft sant Gereonis**
 xxvij. partickel **Ein ganz beyn auß d heiligen gesellschaft Gereonis**
 Ein ganz haupt auß der gesellschaft Gereonis **Sūma. lxxij. p.**

Fig. 11. Lucas Cranach the Elder, "Obergult kast mit vielen mermelstein", woodcut illustration to the Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch (1509), fol. 17r.

the crown of thorns – specifically the one, as it is explained in the *Heil-tumsbuch*, that pierced deeply into Christ's skull. The emphasis on the Passion of Christ differs in the painting and the woodcut. In the left upper part of the painting, the main relics of Wittenberg are depicted: cross and crown [Fig. 12]. Furthermore, the iconography of the ten thousand martyrs together with Jesus as the first Christian martyr can be considered as representatives for all holy mortal remains in the church. Dürer's painting includes all of them.

Finally, let us return to the center of the painting. Dürer and Celtes stride side by side through the scene. Celtes had died one month before the completion of Dürer's work, which has led to the common speculation that Dürer integrated him into the painting on short notice as an epitaph. Because of the complexity of the subject, this appears to me as utterly improbable: the depiction of Celtes was planned from the beginning or at least ever since he himself had sent his own memorial image to close friends like Frederick the Wise or Hartmann Schedel in the late summer of 1507.⁴¹

In 1935, Wilhelm Waetzold first recognized that Dürer and Celtes amidst the martyred ten thousand bear a resemblance to Dante and his guide Virgil.⁴² In 1978, Friderike Klauner repeated this idea in a few sentences in her important essay on "Dürers Allerheiligenbilder",⁴³ but until today research has not accepted these suggestions. Fedja Anzelewsky for example dispatches the idea of a connection to the *Divina Commedia* as unconvincing in one single sentence without giving any argument.⁴⁴ On the contrary, I try to follow Waetzold's and Klauner's observation, extending its implications from the two central figures to the painting's whole program. These arguments can be proven by a comparison of the *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* with early prints illustrating the *Divina Commedia*. The Florentine print of 1481, for example, was well-known in Wittenberg as well as in Nuremberg and could have inspired Dürer

⁴¹ Hans Burgkmair the Elder, *Memorial Image ('Sterbebild') of Konrad Celtes*, 1507, 25.2 × 14.5 cm, Nuremberg Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv.-no. H 7491, 31; Luh P., *Kaiser Maximilian gewidmet. Die unvollendete Werkausgabe des Conrad Celtis und ihre Holzschnitte*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 377 (Frankfurt am Main: 2001) 281–312.

⁴² Waetzoldt W., *Dürer und seine Zeit* (Wien: 1935) 37–38: 'Oder – was ich glaube – wandelt das Freundespaar durch die Hölle der Menschenquälerei wie Dante und Vergil durch die Schrecknisse der Hölle? Der humanistischen Denkweise Pirckheimers hätte auch eine solche Wiederbelebung eines erhabenen Motives nahegelegen'.

⁴³ Klauner F., "Gedanken zu Dürers Allerheiligenbildern", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 75 (1979) 57–92.

⁴⁴ Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer I* 221: 'Weniger überzeugend ist Frau Klauers Vermutung, dass es einen Zusammenhang mit Dantes *Divina comedia* gebe'.

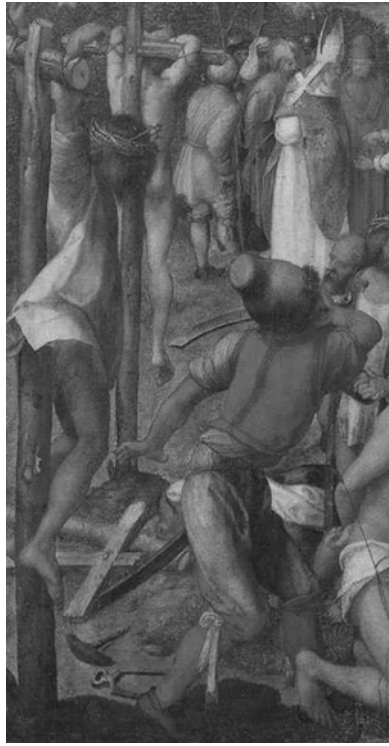


Fig. 12. Albrecht Dürer, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (1508). Oil on canvas, 99 × 87 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie. Detail, lower left part of the painting, with crosses and crown.

[Fig. 13]: beyond Dante and Virgil, who stride through the illustrations just as Celtes and Dürer stride through the painting, are numerous tortures, torments, and plummeting bodies. From 1472 to 1500, fifteen versions of the *Divina Commedia* were printed.⁴⁵

Even more striking are the parallels to yet another printed source that has been totally overlooked by scholars thus far: the works of Virgil edited

⁴⁵ Dionisotti C., "Dante nel Quattrocento", in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi danteschi* (Florence: 1965) I 333–378; Ley K. – Laue A.K., "Mainzer Drucker in Italien und die frühen Ausgaben der *Divina Commedia*", in Ley K. (ed.), *Kanonbildung – Textkritik – Zensur. Dante Alighieri und sein Werk in Literatur, Musik und Kunst bis zur Postmoderne* (Tübingen: 2010) 25–54.



CANTO. XIX. DELLA PRIMA CANTICA DI DANTHE.

Questo el decimonono canto : nel quale dimostra che nella terza bolgia sono puniti esumonia
 G : E/ simonia uendita o compra delle cose sacre et spirituali con denari et chon cose equiva
 lenti a denari. Adunque chi uende o compra sacramenti della chiesa : o alcuna degnità spirituale .

Simon magho o miseri sequaci
 che le cose di dio che di bontade
 debbon essere spose: et uoi rapaci
 Per oro et per argento adulterate
 hor conuen che per uoi suoni la tromba
 pero che nella terza bolgia state
 Già crauamo alla sequente tomba
 montati dello scoglio in quella parte
 chappunto s'oual mezzo elfosso piomba.

o beneficii. o altre cose simili : delle quali el ue
 ro prezzo e/ non oro ne argento: Ma sanctità di
 uita et di costumi: et uirtù: et doctrina e/ simo
 niaco: elquale nome uiene da Simon magho: el
 quale fu el primo che tento questa scellerateza
 nel nuouo testamento. Ilche actioche più aperta
 mente s'intenda e/ scripto ne giacti degl'aposto
 li: che dopo lamorte del prothomartire Stepha
 no Philippo predicaua uerbum dei in Samaria:
 et conuertiuu molti per gli incredibili miracholi
 che facea. Era nel medesimo tempo in quella cite
 ta Simone philosopho et magho: elquale per le
 chofe che facea con sue arti maghe era infomma
 auctorità et reputatione. Chosui insieme chon

gl'altri credete a Philippo et baptezossi. Ma anchora ne baptezati di samaria non era lo spirito sancto:
 Ma uenuti poi Pietro et Ioanni ororono pe baptezati: et dopo loratione posono loro le mani adosso:
 et quegli riceuettono lo spirito sancto. Ilperche parendo gran chofa a Simone che pel porre della ma
 no lo spirito sancto uenissi/offersse pecunia a gl'apostoli: et loro gli dessino tale potestà: che ponendo la
 mano adosso al baptezato gli uenissi lo spirito sancto: alquale rispose Piero La pecunia tua fra teo in
 perdizione. Et certo perche tu stimasti che el dono di dio si potessi hauere per pecunia tu non hai par
 te ne forte in questo sermone: Et el tuor tuo non e/ diricto nel conspecto di dio. Tienti la tua pecu
 nia: et priegha idio se possibile e/ che questa cogitatione si parta del tuor tuo: perche io ti ueggio esse
 re nel fiele dellamaritudine: et nel uincolo della iniquità. Da questo Simone adunque sono detti simo
 niaci nel nuouo testamento quegli che contractano chon prezzo le chofe sacre: Chome nel testamento
 uecchio erano denominati da Giezi seruo d'eliseo propheta. Curo Heliseo propheta dalla lebbra Na
 man principe della militia del re di Syria in uirtù di dio. Ne uolle riceuere alcun premio da lui: ben
 che g'hauessi arrechatu assai thesori. Ma Giezi seruo d'eliseo paritosi già Naaman giando drieto et rag
 giungitelo: et finxe che due de figliuoli de propheti fussino uenuti allui dal monte ephraim: et domando

Fig. 13. Anonymous, woodcut illustration to Dante's *Divina Commedia* (Florence: 1481), Canto XIX.

in 1502 by Sebastian Brant [Fig. 14]. On folio 274r one finds numerous details illustrating Aeneas's descent into Hades that afterwards were adopted by Dürer in his woodcut and later on in his painting. To name but a few: the tortured figure lying at the bottom of the picture; the martyrs who are bound to a tree and scourged; the torturers who batter the bodies of the martyrs with stakes or pull their hair. Furthermore, the adaptations from the Strasbourg Virgil indicate that the commonly accepted dating of the woodcut as approximately 1498 because of the alleged similarity to the Apocalypse woodcuts must be wrong.

But there are not only convincing stylistic references but also references with regard to contents between Celtes and Virgil. In his *Ars versificandi*, first printed in 1486 and dedicated to Frederick the Wise, Celtes published an ode to Apollo in which he acclaims the transmission of the poetic arts from the Romans to the Germans. Here Celtes takes up one of Virgil's ideas (*Georgica* III, 10–11), analogously singing about the 'translatio atrium' from the Greeks to the Romans. In 1487 Celtes was crowned 'poeta laureatus' by Emperor Frederick III; he was the first German on whom this honor was bestowed, his intercessor had been Frederick the Wise – and the 'poeta laureatus' per se was Virgil.

Just as the fourth canto of the *Divina Commedia* speaks of 'la selva [...] di spiriti spessi'⁴⁶ – the forest of the densely packed souls – Dürer assembles the souls of the ten thousand martyrs in his painting. Dante lists the most distinguished poets of all times as Homer, Horace, Ovid and Lucan – and Celtes as the new Virgil is being inscribed into this prestigious group by Dürer. Moreover, Virgil's *Aeneid* could also be connected to the painting in another way, as in the sixth book Aeneas is able to enter Hades only by carrying a branch:

There lurks in a shady tree a bough, golden leaf and pliant stem, held consecrate to nether Juno [Proserpine]; this all the grove hides, and shadows veil in the dim valleys. But it is not given to pass beneath earth's hidden places, before someone has plucked from the tree the golden-tressed fruitage.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia. Die Göttliche Komödie. I: Inferno/Hölle*, ed. H. Köhler (Stuttgart: 2010) v. 66.

⁴⁷ Virgil *Ecloques, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, Loeb Classical Library 63, ed. H.R. Fairclough (Cambridge/Mass.: 1935), VI, v. 137–142. P. Vergilii Maronis, *Aeneis*, Bibliotheca Teubneriana, ed. G.B. Conte (Berlin – New York: 2009) VI, v. 137–142. 'latet arbore opaca / aureus et foliis et lento vimine ramus, / Iunoni infernae dictus sacer; hunc tegit omnis / lucus et obscuris claudunt convallibus umbrae. / sed non ante datur telluris operta subire, / auri-comos quam qui decerpserit arbore fetus'.

Can it therefore be mere coincidence that Dürer himself carries a branch as a messenger's staff? An even more striking parallel can be drawn with regard to Celtes lying moribund on his deathbed: the second condition the Cumaean Sibyl asks of Aeneas before he enters Hades is that he arrange for an honorable burial for his friend who had died shortly before:

Moreover, there lies the dead body of your friend – ah, you know it not! – and defiles all the fleet with death, while you seek counsel and hover on our threshold. Bear him first to his own place and hide him in the tomb.⁴⁸

To be equated with Virgil was the greatest honor for the German 'poeta laureatus'. Celtes, who had been appointed teacher of ancient poetry in Vienna by Emperor Maximilian I, embodied the model for transalpine humanism. Just as Dürer excelled in the art of painting, Frederick excelled as political leader with recourse to Maximilian, and Celtes excelled in the art of poetry; all three wanted to be perceived as ambassadors of humanist culture in the North, where the books of Vergil and Cicero – so Celtes charged – were avoided just as a Jew feared the taste of pork.

More broadly – relating to the whole iconographic program of the painting – to tie Dante to a religious work of art is not new at all, mainly in Italian art. Let us just remember the ambitious Thomist or Dominican program in the Capella Strozzi di Mantova in Santa Maria Novella, Florence, which was frescoed by Nardo di Cione between 1350 and 1357, and which shows the different stages of hell based on the *Divina Commedia* [Fig. 15].⁴⁹ As with Dürer, even the iconography of the martyrdom of the ten thousand was connected to Dante's opus magnum by Italian artists. Vittore Carpaccio's *Martyrdom* of 1515 shows a funnel-shaped apparition right above the mountain of purgatory, directly connecting the mountain of Ararat with Dante's vision of purgatory, enabling the martyrs to ascend to Heaven [Fig. 16]. The close relation of Carpaccio's and Dürer's exegesis of the legend to the *Commedia* becomes even more apparent by comparing it with other versions of the theme, such as the woodcut by Lucantio degli Uberti, datable to 1512–1515: his treatment shows a rather verbally accurate realization of the legend's texts.

⁴⁸ Virgil *Aeneid* I–VI, VI, v. 149–152. P. Vergilii Maronis *Aeneis* VI, v. 149–152: 'praeterea iacet exanimus tibi corpus amici / heu nescis – totamque incestat funere classem, / dum consulta petis nostroque in limine pendes. / sedibus hunc refer ante suis et conde sepulcro.'

⁴⁹ Pitts F.L., *Nardo di Cione and the Strozzi Chapel Frescoes. Iconographic Problems in Mid-Trecento Florentine Painting* (Ann Arbor: 1984).

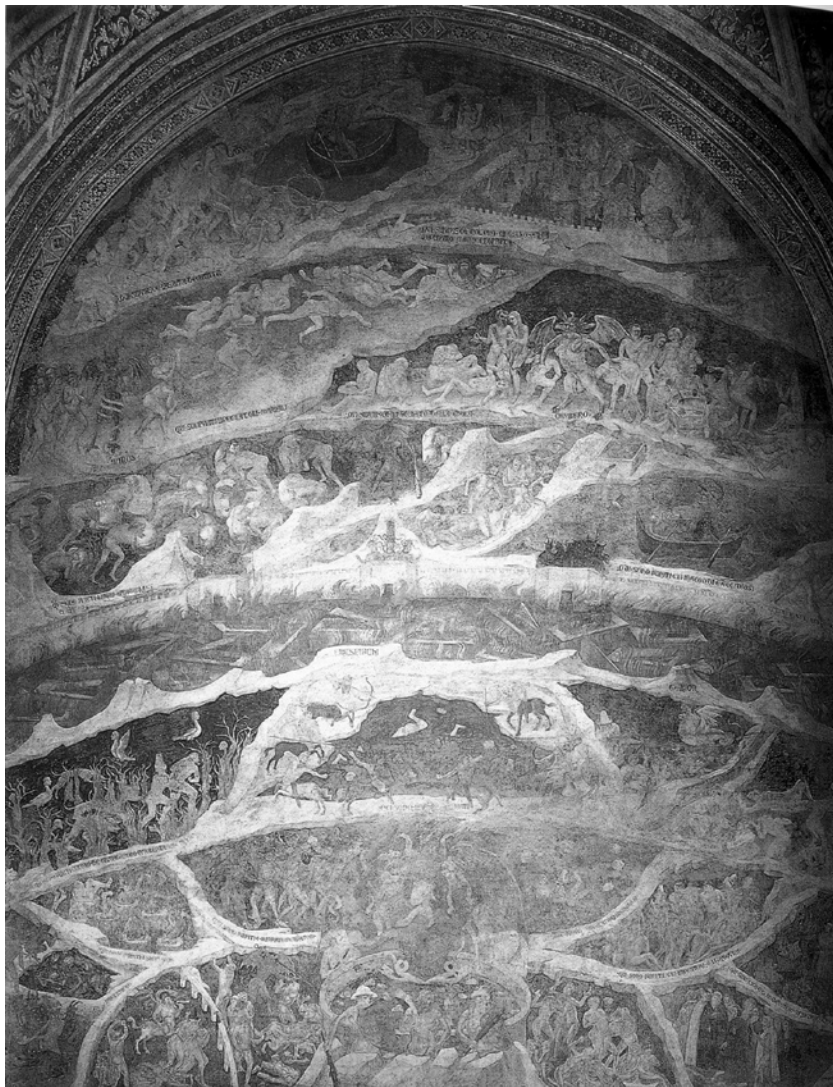


Fig. 15. Nardo di Cione, *Stages of Hell* based on *Dante's Divina Commedia*, painted for the Capella Strozzi di Mantova (1350–1357). Fresco. Florence, Santa Maria Novella.



Fig. 16. Vittore Carpaccio, *Crucifixion of the Ten Thousand Martyrs on Mount Ararat* (1515). Oil on panel, 307 × 205 cm. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.

By way of conclusion, and further corroborating this assumption, I would like to draw attention to another detail in Dürer's *Martyrdom*: the dog jumping at the blond child. This animal appears in different works by Dürer over a long span of time, as Colin Eisler has demonstrated. It has been identified by Erwin Panofsky, an ardent connoisseur of dogs whose interpretation I gladly assent to, as a kind of 'monkey terrier' that might well have been Dürer's own dog.⁵⁰ Remarkably enough, the animal is also part of an image of Celtes made by either Dürer himself or the so-called Celtes Master, lying at the poet's feet and designated by the Greek name 'Lachne', which means wool, woollen hair or flake [Fig. 17]. This name stems from one of Actaeon's dogs in the account in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is shown on the shelf behind the poet, together with the works of Juvenal, Horace and Virgil.⁵¹ Moreover, there is a connection to an epigram that Celtes had composed regarding Dürer: 'Albrecht's pen is so marvelous and so is his talent. He painted a self-portrait that was made exactly from nature, and so his dog came running and reckoned the portrait to be his living master and caressed it with his body and his mouth'.⁵²

This piece is entitled "De cane eiusdem", which can be translated as 'about his dog' and interprets the famous story from Pliny about the Greek painter Zeuxis: Dürer's dog saw a portrait of the painter and came to lick the artist's face without recognizing that it was only a picture. Interestingly, the dog Lachne appears again on a bookplate for Christoph Scheuerl, who was Celtes's pupil [Fig. 18].⁵³ By inserting the 'woollen' dog Lachne into his own painting, the artist commemorates a scholarly game played with Celtes, who on his part had ennobled Dürer as 'alter Apelles'.

But why has the complexity of the iconographic program with its humanist and North Italian parts and topics of everyday politics so often been overlooked by research? In my opinion, the conception of an innovative and humanist elector did not fit the image that was manifested by the

⁵⁰ Eisler C.T., *Dürer's Animals* (Washington: 1991) 56.

⁵¹ Konrad Celtes, *Quattuor libri amorum*, 26.1 × 18.2 cm, woodcut by Albrecht Dürer or the Master of the Celtes-Illustrations, 1502, fol. a7r.

⁵² "Tantus peniculo est, sic lineamenta colorant / Albertus miro peditus ingenio / Ut, cum se nuper ficto depinxerat ore / Expressa et facies jam sua tota foret, / Mox canis accurrit dominum et vivum esse putabat /

Blandiciasque sibi corpora et ore dabat'. See Wuttke D., "Unbekannte Celtis-Epigramme zum Lobe Dürers", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 30 (1967) 321–325, esp. 323 no. 71.

⁵³ The coat of arms for the Scheuerl family was long attributed to Albrecht Dürer himself while Schoch attributes it to the Master of the Celtes Illustrations, see: Schoch. – Mende. – Scherbaum, *Albrecht Dürer A 14*.

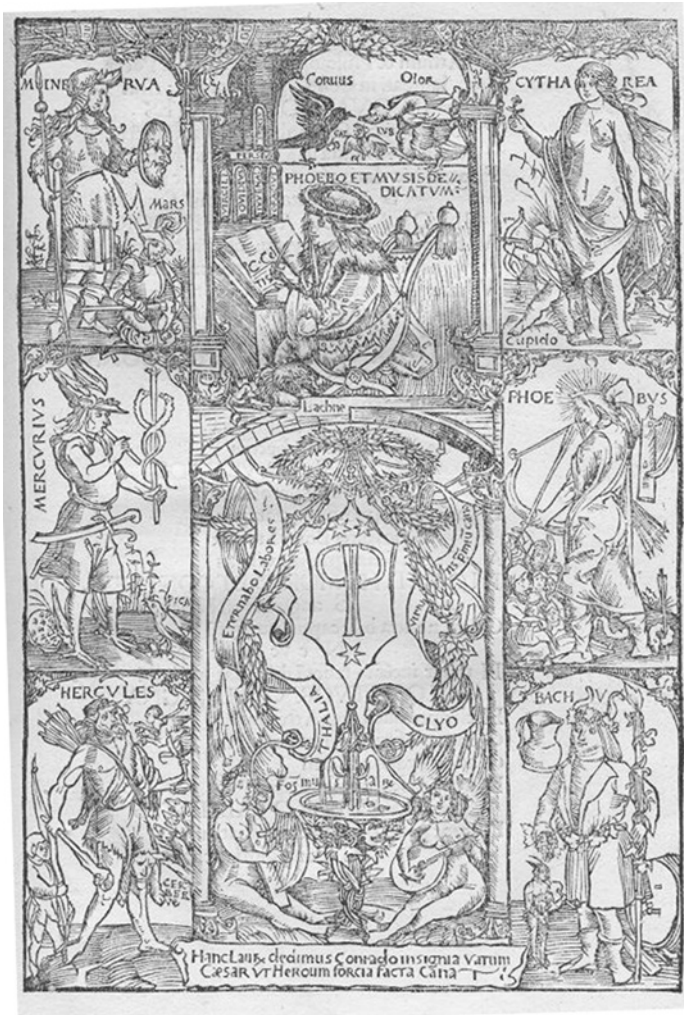


Fig. 17. Anonymous, woodcut of Albrecht Dürer or the Master of the Celtes-Illustrations, in Konrad Celtes, *Quattuor libri amorum* (1502), fol. a7r.



Fig. 18. Albrecht Dürer (?), *Coat of Arms of the Scheuerl and the Tucher Families* (1512). Woodcut, 29.8 × 20.5 cm.

Reformation: Frederick became the patient, teachable patron of Luther, his collection of relics an old-fashioned holdover, and the castle church, the building our painting was made for, the place of Protestant worship per se,⁵⁴ after – and this can be seen as a deliberate reallocation – Luther nailed his 95 theses to the Wittenberg church door on 31 October, one day before the feast of ‘omnium sanctorum’, All Saints’ day on 1 November.

The multiple levels of meaning of the Wittenberg *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, the inversion of models that Dürer included for the public in Wittenberg, were not appreciated in a post-Reformation society. Today we have to decode the different levels of meaning. And – as I have tried to demonstrate on the basis of Dürer’s *Martyrdom* – the works of art offer a variety of clues.

⁵⁴ Niehr K., “Memorialmaßnahmen. Die Wittenberger Schloßkirche im frühen 16. Jahrhundert”, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 71 (2008) 335–372.

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VISUAL EXEGESIS AND SOCIAL HISTORY:
HIERONYMUS BECK VON LEOPOLDSDORF (1525–1596) AND
HIS STRATEGIES OF SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT*

Wolfgang Neuber

Visual exegesis often entails more than a cognitive process directed towards the understanding of an image in itself. The exegesis of fifteenth-century Italian donor portraits, for example, has been shown by Michael Baxandall to offer clues about the social status of the donor through the material value of the pigments used.¹ The case I am going to present here is less known but runs along the same lines, with an even stronger accent on the pictures' reference to the person who commissioned them; in its own time, Hieronymus Beck's portrait book served primarily as an index of the high social rank and ambition of Beck himself, thus demanding a mode of exegesis that would focus not so much on the artifice or iconography of the single portrait, but rather on the societal framework that the images reflect and the sponsor's position within this framework.²

*Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf: A Biographical Sketch*³

Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf was born the eldest son of Markus Beck von Leopoldsdorf on 8 October 1525. His father had been a commoner

* Research for this article was made possible by the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) whose support during the ten months from September 2008 to June 2009 has been invaluable in writing a comprehensive study on early modern European family books; I wish to express my sincere gratitude to NIAS.

¹ Cf. Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: 1972).

² The book is now at the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna), Gemäldegalerie, Inv.-Nr. 9691.

³ Unless indicated otherwise, all biographical information comes from the Becks' family book, Klosterneuburg, Cod. 747; an edition of this manuscript is forthcoming. Cf. also Neuber W., "Exscribo ergo sum. Self-Reflexion and Meditation in Early Modern German Family Books", in Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self. Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 17 (Leiden: 2011) 109–124; Beck M., *Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf (1525–1596). Eine kulturgeschichtliche Studie* (Vienna: 1973).

who rose swiftly and smoothly in the hierarchy of the Viennese court.⁴ Markus Beck had begun his career as Royal Chamber Procurator and was knighted by King Ferdinand I in 1530 at the age of 39.⁵ The king subsequently appointed him Vice-Regent of Austria and, finally, Chancellor of Lower Austria. Markus Beck's affiliation in 1525 with a wide spectrum of political dignitaries was sufficient to ensure that an illustrious group stood sponsor for his son Hieronymus: Theoderich Kammerer, bishop of Wiener Neustadt; Albin Greffinger, rector of the university of Vienna; and Katharina Gutrater, the wife of Gabriel Gutrater. Gutrater had been the university's rector in 1500 and was a high-ranking administrative official ('*Stadtschreiber*') of the city and mayor of Vienna from 1522 to 1524. He Hellenized his name to 'Eubolius' to mark his standing as a scholar and as a member of the renowned '*Sodalitas Danubiana*', in the context of which he had become friends with the eminent humanist Johannes Cuspinianus.

Markus's high standing with the king was such that in 1527 he was granted the privilege of having his son educated together with Ferdinand's eldest son, who would later become Emperor Maximilian II. In 1532, Hieronymus went to Innsbruck to be educated there together with the then five-year-old Maximilian and the rest of the royal children under the guidance of Caspar Ursinus Velius, another eminent humanist and poet laureate and a friend of Erasmus.

It is impossible to establish exactly when Hieronymus returned from Innsbruck to his parental home in Vienna. In January 1543, however, he left Vienna again, this time for Zwettl in northern Lower Austria, to receive further education from Dr. Johannes Rosinus. Rosinus was poet laureate and royal court chaplain, and had been, like Ursinus Velius, educator of King Ferdinand's children. Between 1536 and 1544 he held the positions of provost of the Cistercian monastery at Zwettl and provost of St. Stephen's cathedral in Vienna. When in 1544 Rosinus became chancellor of the university of Vienna,⁶ Hieronymus probably also returned to the capital. On 1 October 1544, however, he moved on to Padua to read law

⁴ Cf. Möschl C., *Dr. Marcus Beck von Leopoldsdorf. Ein Staatsmann Ferdinands I. (1491–1553)* (Vienna: 1969).

⁵ As early as 1523, Markus Beck by the then archduke (later king) Ferdinand I had been endowed with the title "von Leopoldsdorf" together with a coat of arms and the privilege to take part in tournaments (of which there is no report).

⁶ Cf. Aschbach J. von, *Geschichte der Wiener Universität*, 3 vols. (Vienna: 1865–1888) III 10f., 29f., 56.

there. His books and clothes had been sent ahead by his father to Venice with a royal privilege of customs exemption.⁷

It seems, though, that Hieronymus never finished his studies. Other interests interfered. In 1546 he set out on a journey that would span four years. It did not take him to academic destinations, but followed the aristocratic pattern of a *grand tour*. The journey took him and Michel Carsin, his groom, cook and servant,⁸ through the Holy Roman Empire, the Low Countries, France, England, Spain, Italy, and Cyprus, and as far as Istanbul, Asia Minor, Jerusalem, Egypt, and Arabia. Rome seems to have been one of the last prominent stops for Hieronymus where he paid a visit for the Holy Year 1550.⁹ The harvest of all this traveling was a collection of archaeological objects and costly books and manuscripts, amongst which were the now-famous *Res gestae familiae Ottomanae* and the *Reges Arsacidarum*; upon his return, Hieronymus donated both to the king. Of course, Hieronymus did not give away all his books. On the contrary, during his lifetime he gained renown as a collector of humanist writings.

On 19 June 1553, he married for the first time. By Barbara von Spangstein (19 November 1536–11 December 1558) he had two sons, Sigmund and Hannibal. 1553 is also the year his father Markus died, only three months before Hieronymus's wedding. After his father's death and especially the death of his stepmother in 1557, Hieronymus inherited the paternal dominions,¹⁰ he became a rich man himself. In 1554, he bought the dominion of Unterwaltersdorf near Vienna. In the same year, the king impawned to Hieronymus, in the form of a private loan, the dominion and the castle of Hainburg as well as the administrative offices of the town of Zwettl. In 1555, Ferdinand appointed him Councillor of the Lower Austrian Chamber. Even though Hieronymus had never completed his higher studies, his great wealth, along with his father's and his own connections, paved his way into the royal and later imperial administration and court.

⁷ Cf. passport letter ('Paßbrief') by Ferdinand I, 19 August 1544 (Möschl C., *Dr. Marcus Beck von Leopoldsdorf. Ein Staatsmann Ferdinands I. (1491–1553)* [Vienna: 1969] 22).

⁸ Cf. [Hormayr J. von]: "Österreichische Reisende aus der Vorzeit 7. Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf", in *Taschenbuch für die Vaterländische Geschichte* 9 (1828) 23–30, here 25f.

⁹ Cf. *ibidem* 25.

¹⁰ Concerning the testament and codicil, cf. Wißgrill F.K., *Schauplatz des landsässigen Nieder-Oesterreichischen Adels vom Herren- und Ritterstande von dem XI. Jahrhundert an, bis auf jetzige Zeiten*, 5 vols. (vol. V continued by Karl von Odelga) (Vienna: 1794–1804), I 329.

Fourteen months after his first wife's death, Hieronymus remarried on 25 February 1560. By Magdalena von Rappach (25 April 1540–8 November 1562) he had two more children, Christoph and Martha. In August 1560, the king sent him on a legal and economic mission to Millstatt in Carinthia where together with Bartholomäus von Cataneis, the provost of Herzogenburg, he set about the task of reorganizing the land tenure and finances of the derelict Order of the Knights of St. George.

In 1564, Hieronymus began to serve as Councillor of the Court Chamber; he seems to have done so obediently, if not quite voluntarily. On 3 September the same year, he married Maria von Schärffenberg by whom he had at least another six children (Hans, Joachim, Markus, Leonhard, Barbara, and Markus Eberhard).¹¹ Three years later, he bought some minor properties in Lower Austria from Hans Gruber zu Grub. In 1568, he purchased the dominion of Ebreichsdorf near Vienna from Karl Ludwig von Zelking for 18,000 florins. This dominion bordered on Unterwaltersdorf, which had been in his possession since 1554.

On 1 January 1569, another advancement in the court's hierarchy came about when Hieronymus was appointed Chief Purser ('Proviandmeister') of Hungary. At the time, Hieronymus was obviously planning to rearrange his life. The very same year, he sold his dominion at Harraß to Christoph Zoppel. He tried to raise even more money. In 1570, he sold his parental house in Vienna for 5,000 florins to Georg Teufel, baron of Guntersdorf, and he urged Emperor Maximilian II to return a private loan of no less than 25,000 florins. It was not before 1581, however, that he started spending money on his properties on a large scale. He had Leopoldsdorf castle refurbished¹² and began to fortify Ebreichsdorf castle, which he made the center of his life. He had a park established in its surroundings and moved his valuable collection of antiquities and his library there.¹³

We do not know what books and how many Hieronymus possessed. The most cherished item in his library, however, must have been the Becks' family book, which Hieronymus had inherited from his father. It had been his grandfather, Konrad, who began the book around 1465 by copying all kinds of texts into one codex: medical rules, astrological treatises, texts on humoral pathology, a book of sortition, Petrarch's novella *Griseldis* and the novel *Melusine* by Thüring von Ringoltingen. This novel, dealing with the founding history of the noble family of Lusignan, had prompted

¹¹ Documentation is rather vague on this subject.

¹² Cf. Möschl, *Dr. Marcus Beck von Leopoldsdorf* 145.

¹³ The library was later bought by Emperor Matthias and integrated into the court library (cf. Möschl, *Dr. Marcus Beck von Leopoldsdorf* 145).

Konrad to start making notes about his own family in the codex. When Konrad died, his son Hans Beck briefly took over, soon passing the family book on to his half-brother Markus, Hieronymus's father.

How can we know that Hieronymus actually cherished his family book? The first answer would have to be that he continued it after Markus's death. His last entry concerns his nephew's wedding in 1571, but he may have been adding to it for a longer time; a couple of leaves could be missing today due to a new binding of the codex in later times. The second answer would have to draw attention to a remarkable feature of the Beck family book. In 1543 – which is to say, while his father was still alive and head of the family – Hieronymus made a significant addition to the codex. At the very beginning of the family book he entered a complete list of all King Ferdinand's children, including their birthdates and, whenever applicable, their weddings and their death dates, making it appear as if they belonged to the Beck clan. In a way Hieronymus obviously felt related to the royal family, as he had been educated with crown prince Maximilian and the other royal children.

Thirdly, Hieronymus was also interested in his ancestry, especially his grandfather. Konrad Beck had gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1483 and left a travel account about that journey. It was Hieronymus who had the manuscript bound in 1553, when it fell to him after his father's death. The front cover is hollowed out on the inside and a sheet of selenite, which at the time was often used for reliquaries, seals the cavity. Within this cavity there is a fold of paper with an inscription in Konrad Beck's hand, reading 'Cunrat becken bart von jherusalem anno 1483^o' ('Konrad Beck's beard from Jerusalem anno 1483'). As Hieronymus states, it was he who had his grandfather's beard deposited there ('illiusque Barbam huc reposuit').

Clearly, Hieronymus was a family man and also very concerned about his social standing. He was a knight by his father's ennoblement, but three of his sons are called 'barons' in the register of the university of Vienna. There is an entry dated 14 April 1575 that reads:

Ioannes	}	Peck a Leopoldstarff barones Austr. ¹⁴
Ioachim		
Marcus		

¹⁴ Gall F. – Szaivert W. (eds.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Wien*, Publikationen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, VI. Reihe: Quellen zur Geschichte der Universität Wien, 1. Abteilung, vols. II–III (Vienna – Cologne – Graz: 1967–1971) III 166.

Hieronymus Beck died on 28 November 1596. Less than five months later, in March 1597, two of these sons, Joachim and Markus, together with a fourth one, Hannibal, sent a supplication to the emperor requesting elevation to the ranks of the higher aristocracy ('Herrenstand').¹⁵ These facts – Hieronymus being a knight by his father's ennoblement and his sons being called 'barones' – need not necessarily contradict each other. Hieronymus may have got a barony in the early 1570s, albeit not a hereditary one. His sons would then have felt the need after their father's death to ask the emperor to bestow the aristocratic rank on them as well. It is also quite imaginable that Emperor Maximilian II, Hieronymus's childhood companion, failed to pay back the loan of 25,000 florins and made him a baron instead. Yet another possibility would be that despite being barons themselves, they had not belonged to the Holy Roman Empire's lords ranking above the lower nobility. Be that as it may, the early 1570s were crucial times for Hieronymus Beck in terms of his social standing. He tried to raise money, sold his father's house in Vienna, and moved to one of his dominions, probably to Ebreichsdorf. Apparently he tried to lead a life that would befit a member of the landed gentry.

The Exegesis of Rank

We cannot be sure if Hieronymus's ambitions actually coincided with his relinquishing of his family book as early as 1571. Tellingly enough, however, at that time Hieronymus made a move from text to image to represent his rank and social network. It was either in addition to, or in replacement of, the family book that he began to have a portrait book made around 1570–1580.¹⁶ Images clearly possessed more dignity than texts and were a more prestigious way to express rank.

¹⁵ Möschl, *Dr. Marcus Beck von Leopoldsdorf* 18.

¹⁶ Cf. Heinz G., "Das Porträtbuch des Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf", in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 71 (1975) 165–310. Cf. also Fellner S., "Das adelige Porträt. Zwischen Typus und Individualität", in *Adel im Wandel. Politik, Kultur, Konfession 1500–1700. Katalog der niederösterreichischen Landesausstellung Rosenberg 12. Mai–28. Oktober 1990* (Vienna: 1990) 498–519; Stichel R.H.W., "Ein Nachtrag zum Porträtbuch des Hieronymus Beck von Leopoldsdorf – Bildnisse orientalischer Herrscher und Würdenträger in cod. Vindob. 8615", *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* 1997 (1999) 189–207; Pelc M., *Illustrium imagines. Das Porträtbuch der Renaissance*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 88 (Leiden: 2002).

In its present state the portrait book comprises 240 miniatures in opaque color, the latest of which seem to have been entered in the 1590s. Members of the Beck clan and those related to them by marriage, members of the House of Austria, of the Austrian landed gentry, Austrian court officials, European aristocracy, some 'uomini illustri' and influential Viennese burghers are represented here.¹⁷ With his portrait book Hieronymus expressed a different representational behavior from that of his father, Markus Beck. Markus had also had his portrait made. Augustin Hirschvogel, an artist from Nuremberg, had moved to Vienna in 1544 and was appointed City Cartographer in 1546. After this advancement in the social hierarchy, he was commissioned by Markus Beck to make a double portrait in etching of him and his wife Barbara von Werdenstein in 1547 [Fig. 1].¹⁸

Hieronymus, for his part, had something very different in mind. He was not interested in having just his own portrait made and certainly not in the less prestigious graphic form of a mere etching that he may have considered good enough only for commoners and scholars (Markus is referred to as 'doctor' in the subscription). What Hieronymus Beck wanted was a portrait gallery in painting, albeit in opaque color miniatures, in the shape of a book that would parallel or continue his family book in a different medium. The difference is evident in Markus Beck's picture in the portrait book [Fig. 2].¹⁹ Clearly, this image is far more prestigious and typologically aligned with aristocratic representational portraits. The guiding principle of Hieronymus Beck's portrait book is not so much the individual characterization of a person, but rather the presentation of rank and historical setting.²⁰ The four pictures showing Hieronymus himself exactly follow this type [Figs. 3–6]. The earliest picture is the smaller copy of a portrait from ca. 1535 by Ferdinand's court painter, Jakob Seisenegger, who portrayed the king's children in Innsbruck between 1535 and 1537.²¹

Hieronymus Beck's portrait book was rebound early in the seventeenth century.²² On the one hand, this helped preserve the most comprehensive

¹⁷ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 168f.

¹⁸ Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, StN. 16643; cf. Strauss W.L., *The Illustrated Bartsch 18: German Masters of the Sixteenth Century: Hirschvogel, Huys, Ladenspelder* (New York: 1982) 246, nr. 37.

¹⁹ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 276.

²⁰ Cf. Fellner, "Das adelige Porträt" 504.

²¹ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 276–278.

²² The leather cover (53 × 37 cm) bears the imperial coat of arms on its front and the archducal coat of arms on the back (cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 170).



Fig. 1. Augustin Hirschvogel, *Markus and Barbara Beck von Leopoldsdorf* (1547).
Etching, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (Inv.-Nr. STN 16643).



Fig. 2. [COL. PL. 18] Anonymous, *Markus Beck* (ca. 1545), in Hieronymus Beck's Portrait Book. Opaque color. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Inv.-Nr. 9691, Fol. 9).



Fig. 3. Anonymous after Jakob Seisenegger, *Hieronymus Beck* (ca. 1535), in Hieronymus Beck's Portrait Book. Opaque color. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Inv.-Nr. 9691, Fol. 13).



Fig. 4. Anonymous, *Hieronymus Beck* (ca. 1554–1558), in Hieronymus Beck's Portrait Book. Opaque color. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Inv.-Nr. 9691, Fol. 15).



Fig. 5. Anonymous, *Hieronymus Beck* (ca. 1564), in Hieronymus Beck's Portrait Book. Opaque color. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Inv.-Nr. 9691, Fol. 19).



Fig. 6. Anonymous, *Hieronymus Beck* (ca. 1580), in Hieronymus Beck's Portrait Book. Opaque color. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Inv.-Nr. 9691, Fol. 23).

collection of portraits coming from an Austrian aristocratic family in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the original order of the images has not survived.²³ There is, however, a distinct model according to which Hieronymus Beck's collection was shaped.

Archduke Ferdinand II (1529–1595) was the second son of King Ferdinand, and Hieronymus must have known him just as well as he knew the archduke's brother, Emperor Maximilian II. Archduke Ferdinand began an extensive collection of portraits at his favored residence at Ambras castle in the Tyrol. He began to do so in the seventies, gathering around one thousand portraits of his ancestry, of members of the German and Italian high aristocracy, especially the electors of Saxony and the Gonzagas, and of famous persons from the past and the present.²⁴ It is the most copious European collection of its kind to have survived.²⁵ All portraits have the same dimension; they are the size of large postcards – much like the format of Hieronymus Beck's portraits, which are 27.5 × 18.3 cm on average. Ferdinand's portraits show a characteristic feature, the combination of images of 'uomini illustri', which largely go back to Paolo Giovio's famous collection of more than four hundred portraits,²⁶ with traditional dynastic series mostly handed down in the shape of family trees. All this also applies to Hieronymus Beck's portrait book.²⁷ Another feature shared by Ferdinand's and Hieronymus Beck's collections is that their assembly strictly follows the collector's personal taste as opposed to the political and practical considerations of the imperial collection of large-format oil paintings.²⁸

Beck did not have copies made from the portraits of Ferdinand II's Ambras collection,²⁹ to which his fifteen or so copyists may not have had immediate access, but mostly from originals in the possession of the

²³ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 171.

²⁴ Cf. Ladner G., *Die Porträtsammlung des Erzherzogs Ferdinand von Tirol* (Vienna: 1932).

²⁵ The present stock of 1077 small images is kept at the Münzkabinett of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna) where it is exhibited along the walls; 913 pictures date from Ferdinand's time.

²⁶ Cf. Müntz E., "Le musée de portraits de Paul Jove. Contributions pour servir à l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance", in *Mémoires de l'Institut Nationale de France, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 36, 2 (1900) 249–343; Rovelli L., *L'opera storica ed artistica di Paolo Giovio comasco, vescovo di Nocera: Il museo dei ritratti* (Como: 1928); Klinger S.L., *The Portrait Collection of Paolo Giovio* (Ann Arbor: 1991).

²⁷ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 167.

²⁸ Cf. Fellner, "Das adelige Porträt" 501.

²⁹ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 174.

House of Austria in Vienna and other Austrian noble families.³⁰ It is evident, however, that he copied the archducal collection as a model: when the archduke began his collection, Hieronymus Beck did the same. In so doing he followed a strategy of self-aggrandizement much in the same vein as he had done when he entered the king's offspring into the Becks family book in 1543.

It may well be true, as Günther Heinz has noted, that Hieronymus Beck was only interested in the persons represented and not in the pictures as such.³¹ The portrait book thus gives testimony to Hieronymus's ambitions as far as his social network and rank are concerned. The change of medium, however, is significant. In the text of his family book there are already references to a lot of outstanding persons – from King and, later on, Emperor Ferdinand I down to some of the most eminent scholars of the time. And yet Hieronymus aimed at something more prestigious. Moving from the text of his family book to the images of the portrait book, he followed a pattern of behavior that was clearly inspired by someone above his own social standing. It was only in the medium of the image that Hieronymus could satisfy his social pretensions. The portrait book's visual exegesis as demanded of all persons put in front of it would be focused on exactly this: understanding Hieronymus Beck as being on par with the House of Austria.

³⁰ Copies were taken from the portrait galleries of the aristocratic families Dietrichstein, Blagay, Streun, Breuner and Brassican; cf. Fellner, "Das adelige Porträt" 501f.

³¹ Cf. Heinz, "Das Porträtbuch" 175.

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GIDEON, AN OLD TESTAMENT HERO IN ACTION:
BURGUNDIAN SYMBOLISM AND THE VISUAL LANGUAGE
OF PROTESTANT FLANDERS

Dagmar Eichberger¹

On 20 August 1582, Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon (1555–1584), entered the Calvinist city of Ghent on a white horse, riding under a bright red canopy that was carried by four dignitaries [Fig. 1].² The newly appointed sovereign of the United Provinces had been inaugurated Duke of Brabant in Antwerp on 11 February 1582 and Count of Flanders in Bruges on 17 July 1582.³ William of Orange and the Protestant Netherlandish cities had called upon Duke Francis, brother of the French king, Henry III (1555–1589), and son of the queen, Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589), to overthrow the Habsburg dynasty and defend their country against the Spanish army under the military leadership of Alessandro Farnese (1545–1592).

The Ghent Entry of 1582

Like Antwerp and Bruges, the city of Ghent had prepared an elaborate festive entry for Francis of Anjou to welcome the new ruler in keeping with Burgundian tradition. The processional route traversed the heart of

¹ I would like to thank Holm Bevers who very kindly brought the luxury edition of the 1582 entry to my attention and supported me generously in my research. The following colleagues kindly provided additional support: Elizabeth Brown, Krista De Jonge, Jürgen Eichberger, J. Marius Lange van Ravenswaay, Guido Marnef, Maximiliaan Martens, Walter Melion, Shelley Perlove and Alexandra Walsham. Charlotte Colding Smith improved the readability of my text.

² Heere Lucas de, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François, fils de France, frère unique du Roy, par la grace de Dieu duc de Lothier, de Brabant, de Anjou, d'Alençon et Comte de Flandres, et faicte en sa tresrenomée ville de Gand le xxme d'Aougst 1582*, Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, ms.78 D 6, manuscript on paper with watercolors, 30,3 × 21 cm.

³ Bruaene A.-L. van, "Spectacle and Spin for a Spurned Prince. Civic Staretegies in the Entry Ceremonies of the Duke of Anjou in Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent (1582)", *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, 4–5 (2007) 263–284.



Fig. 1. Lucas D'Heere, "Francis of Anjou on horseback", part of the *Festive Entry into Ghent*, September 1582, watercolor on paper, 30.3 × 21 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, ms. 78 D 6, page inserted at the end. Image © SMPK Berlin

the city, starting off at the French gate, passing by the Church of Saint James and the town hall and ending at the princely residence or *Prinsenhof*, not far from the medieval castle of the counts of Flanders, the *Gravensteen*.⁴ The city had erected a large triumphal arch on *Hoogstraat*, in close proximity to the town hall. Five theatrical stages or tableaux vivants were erected along the processional pathway in order to express the city's views and expectations of the new prince.⁵ The duke of Anjou was accompanied through the city by a large group of honorable citizens.

This entry was truly a multi-media spectacle, with live actors and singers, painted stage sets and a variety of theatrical devices. One important source for the reconstruction of this event is a handwritten luxury edition of the account that was drafted and illustrated in September 1582 by the Ghent artist and poet Lucas de Heere.⁶ An almost identical printed text without illustrations was published in French and Dutch in the same year.⁷ De Heere had spent some time at the court of King Francis II and Catherine de' Medici and probably spoke French fluently.⁸ He was given

⁴ See Sanderus Antonius, *Flandria Illustrata*, 2 vols. (Cologne [Amsterdam], Cornelius ab Egmond [Jan et Cornelis Blaeu]: 1641–1644): 'Aula Principis Gandavi'.

⁵ Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin", has provided the most detailed analysis of the complex and differing messages of the three 1582 entries in Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent; see also: Waterschoot W., "Vorstellijke intochten 1577–1584", in Decavele J. (ed.), *Het eind van een rebelse droom. Opstellen over het calvinistisch bewind te Gent (1577–1587) en de terugkeer van de stad onder de gehoorzaamheid van de koning van Spanje, 17 september 1584* (Ghent: 1984) 113–124. The literature on the subject of festive entries is extensive; for further references, see Mulryne J.R. – Watanabe-O'Kelly H. – Shewring M. (eds.), *Europa triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association 15, 2 vols. (Aldershot: 2004) I.

⁶ De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François*, fol. 2: '[...] Emploiant a ceste fin Lucas d'Heere et autres pour ordonner et designer quelques patrons et proiets propres a ce que dessus : Selon lesquels on mit incontment plusieurs artisans et manouvriers en besongne.'

⁷ Heere Lucas de, *De eerlicke incomste van onsen ghenadighen ende geduchten heere, mijn heere Fransoys an Vranckerijcke, [...] hertoghe van Lothrijc, Brabant, van Anjou, Alençon, Berry, etc. grave van Vlaendren, etc. In syne vermaerde hooft-stadt van Ghent den xxen Augusti: M.D.LXXXII* (Ghent, Cornelis de Rekenare and Jan van den Steene: 1582); Heere Lucas de, *L'entrée magnifique de monseigneur François filz de France, frère unique du roy, par la grace de Dieu Duc de Lothier, [...] Faicte en sa Metropolitaine et fameuse Ville de Gand, le xx d'Aoust, anno 1582* (Ghent, Cornille de Rekenare and Jean vanden Steene: 1582).

⁸ Ibidem, fol. 1r: 'A son Alteze/ Monsieur, me resenant obligé toute ma vie a la France, nourrie de vertue, est consequement a votre Alteze pour les benefices que iy ay receu soubz la protection du feu Roy Francois 2, vostre frère, et estant alors au service de la Roynne vostre mère. Je me suis tant plus volontiers employé a la charge et conduite de l'entrée e V.A. en la ville de Gand'. See also Waterschoot W., "Leven en Betekenis van Lucas D'Heere", *Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* (Ghent: 1974) 32–35.

a pivotal role in devising the stage decorations for the 1582 entry, not the least because he had already gained considerable experience on a similar occasion only five years earlier. In 1577, William I, Prince of Orange (1533–1584), had been welcomed by the city of Ghent with a festive entry of less impressive dimensions. Like many of his fellow citizens, de Heere was a convinced Calvinist and a strong supporter of William, the leader of the Dutch revolt.

The printed editions and the illustrated manuscript disclose that the first and the third tableaux displayed allegorical scenes, one featuring the Maiden of Ghent and one a female personification of Flanders.⁹ The second and fifth tableaux depicted two significant historic events. On a scaffold erected next to the church of Saint James, the visiting prince was portrayed as a peacemaker putting an end to fratricidal war in France by reconciling the Catholic and Huguenot factions.¹⁰ On the fifth stage, located at the entrance to the *Prinsenhof*, the Christian Emperor Constantine defeated his adversary Maxentius with the help of God [Fig. 2]. In the accompanying text Constantine's opponent is explicitly characterized as a tyrant.¹¹ Accordingly, a young woman identified as 'History' addressed the duke of Anjou with the following words: 'Be our Constantine, a prince of great prowess, deliver us also from the inhuman tyrants.'¹²

In another tableau, the organizers drew on the past to address the new ruler. In this case, it was the Ghent chamber of rhetoricians who turned to the Old Testament for the tableau they devised near the prince's residence. Like most Protestants, Calvinists also treated the Old Testament

⁹ Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin" 281–282.

¹⁰ De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François* (Berlin ms.), fol. 7: 'Un frontispiec(e) a l'antique, auquel estoit par figures vives,/ que la paix fut faicte en France, entre le Roy et ceux de/ la Religion reformée par le moyen de son Alteze, représentée par un jeune/ Homme, lequel se trouvant entre deux armée prestes a s'entrebatre/ et separant les parties prononca ces vers:/ Cessez d'ainsi combatre & soyez bon Amis/ Sans faire a vos despens rire voz ennemis./ Et ainsi les deux armées quiterent les armes et sentrebrassoient Comme amis'.

¹¹ Ibidem, fol. 19: 'Auquel theatre/ estoit représenté la Victoire qu'obtint Constantin le grand contre/ le Tyrant Maxence, devant la ville de Rome, estant/ apellé par les Romains, pour les delivrer de la tyrannie et/ servitude en laquelle le dit tyran les avoit long tempz tenuz. Au dict/ spectacle estoit peint le signe que ledict Constantin vit/ en l'air/ c'est assavoir le nom de Christ avec Alpha et Omega,/ ainsi que les medailles dudit Empereur et autres/ les montrent/ et une voix comme venant du Ciel fut ouye qui disoit/ *In hoc vince*.'

¹² Ibidem, fol. 19: 'Le Zeleuse Constantin d'une main vengereße/ S'oppose a un Tyran pour sauver les Romains:/ Sois nostre Constantin, Prince de grand prouesse,/ Nous delivrant außi des Tyrans inhumains.'



Fig. 2. Lucas D'Heere, "Emperor Constantine defeats Maxentius", part of the *Festive Entry into Ghent*, September 1582, watercolor on paper, 30.3 × 21 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, ms. 78 D 6, fol. 20. Image © SMPK Berlin

like a history book or chronicle and relied on it as an important source for unveiling the will of God.¹³ The stage was dedicated to the following subject: 'Gideon elected by God to rule over Israel drove out the enemies and set the Israelites free' [Fig. 3].¹⁴ Gideon, a young man from the tribe of Manasseh, was a much admired hero because of his victory over the powerful Midianites.

In some ways, the theme is similar to the subject of the fifth stage, as a mighty military leader chases away the enemy in order to liberate his people. While Constantine is shown at the end of a victorious battle, the tableau devoted to Gideon conveyed a somewhat different image. Here the actual battle between Gideon and the soldiers of Midian was relegated to the background. One can barely make out the defeated enemy forces running away from Gideon's soldiers. The principal scene in the foreground of the tableau vivant was reserved for God's angel, who approached Gideon from the left. He has raised his right arm to address Gideon, who holds a flail in his hand and looks at the heavenly visitor in surprise. In *Judges* 6:12–24 Gideon is portrayed as a hesitant man who is fearful of a potential encounter with the powerful Midianite army. He asked the angel for signs to prove that God has summoned him to act, and only after having experienced two miracles was he prepared to attack the enemy.

The protracted exchanges between Gideon and the angel were doubtless intended to persuade the duke of Anjou that he should support the difficult cause of the reformed provinces.¹⁵ As Van Bruaene has pointed out, the political situation was far from stable, since Alexander Farnese had conquered several cities in the vicinity of Ghent and was threatening to make further forays into the Calvinist republic.¹⁶ The appeal *Fay comme Gedeon* – 'Act as Gideon did' – that was attached to the top of the stage

¹³ On the use of the term 'Protestant', see Davies C., *A Religion of the Word: The Defence of Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI* (Manchester: 2002) XX–XXII.

¹⁴ De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François* (Berlin ms.), fol. 16: '... un theatre, auquel estoit représenté par les chambres/ de Rhetoriques susnommées que Gedeon estant eslu/ de dieu/ pour regner sur Israel chassa les ennemis et remit les Israelites en/ liberté.'

¹⁵ Ibidem fol. 16, *L'ange*: 'Homme vaillant pour t'oster hors desmoy,/ Je viens ici, Dieu soit avecque toy' – *Gedeon*: 'Las Monseigneur si bien fust avec nous/ Il nous seroit bening & plus doux' – *L'ange*: 'Va bardiment Prince car tu es mis/ Pour d'Israel dompter les ennemis' – *Gedeon*: 'Diz moi Seigneur en quoi ie sauveray/ Tout Israel & le delivreray/ Ma maison est de Manasse la moindre,/ Et mon cœur n'ose a un tel faict s'adjoindre'; fol. 16v: *L'ange*: 'A ton secours seray, va courageus & vite,/ Tu destruiras ce duc, ce duc Madianite'.

¹⁶ Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin" 282.



Fig. 3. Lucas D'Heere, "Gideon and the Angel", part of the *Festive Entry into Ghent*, September 1582, watercolor on paper, 30.3 × 21 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, ms. 78 D 6, fol. 18. Image © SMPK, Berlin

made it blatantly clear what the citizens of Ghent expected of the duke.¹⁷ To both sides of the central scene, the personifications of Love and Peace interpret the biblical event in French and Flemish, so that everybody attending the spectacle or reading the written account in retrospect would understand the city's intentions. Love welcomes the prince, pledges loyalty and equates Francis with the heroic defender David.¹⁸ Peace expresses the hope that the duke of Anjou will overcome the enemy and deliver the city of Ghent and its inhabitants from further sufferings.¹⁹

It becomes apparent that the fourth and fifth stages contained complementary and mutually reinforcing messages; they can be read as a crescendo. Gideon was the doubtful but obedient Israelite who followed the call of God and overcame the enemy. Constantine was victorious because he believed in the call he received from heaven: 'In this sign you will conquer'. With God on his side, he fought for the true religion and was depicted as a triumphant soldier. 'Act as Gideon did' – 'Be our Constantine' was Ghent's plea for support to the duke of Anjou who had not yet proven himself as the strong military leader capable of standing up to the Spanish army lead by Alessandro Farnese.²⁰

In contrast to the entry ceremony in Antwerp, the city of Ghent stressed the fact that its government was decisively Calvinist. In the written accounts of the 1582 entry into Ghent, explicit references were made to the city's dedication to the reformed faith.²¹ For more than a century, Ghent had taken pride in its reputation as a rebellious city.²² In this context the

¹⁷ In the summary strophe, it is stressed that Gideon does his duty without delay and that the duke should do the same: De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François* (Berlin ms.), fol. 16v: 'Gedeon fut a sa grange requis/ Pour estre faict d'Israel l'assurance,/ Sans point tarder hardi il s'y/ avance,/ Faict son debouir & renom ses jacquis./ Ainsi bon duc en suivant ce sentier/ T'ayant requis d'affection fidelle,/ Nous voyant bien aussi que ton bon Zele/ Ne veult tarder nostre secours entier'.

¹⁸ Ibidem, fol. 16v: 'Vien Prince & Duc de Henri Frere unique/ Au nom de Dieu entre en nostre Cité/ Comme un David, defenseur heroique,/ Pour recevoir de nous fidelité'.

¹⁹ Ibidem, fol. 17: 'Comme jadis ce vaillant Gedeon/ Victoire acquit contre toute esperance,/ Ainsi croyons, qu'osteras hors de souffrance/ Nous, noz Citéz & nostre Religion'.

²⁰ Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin" 265–266.

²¹ De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François* (Berlin ms.), fol. 5r [first stage with the maiden Ghent]: 'De quatre autres filles assise plus bas, assavoir: Religion, Amour, Vaillance & Constance, pour denoter qu'elle [= the city of Ghent] faicte profession de la Religion reformée et qu'elle arme son Prince de grand affection, soubz Lequel elle est deliberée de vaillamment combatre iusques a la mort'. Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin" 273–274.

²² Decavele J. (ed.), *Het eind van een rebelse droom. Opstellen over het calvinistisch bewind te Gent (1577–1587) en de terugkeer van de stad onder de gehoorzaamheid van de*

identification of Ghent with the fate of the Israelites is significant. When the iconoclastic outbreak of 1566 brought about persecutions and trials, many Calvinists fled from their hometowns and sought refuge in reformed cities throughout Europe and in the British Isles, especially in London, Emden, Heidelberg and Geneva. Being forced to establish a new life far away from home, they found consolation in the fact that in the Old Testament the Israelites lived in exile and were nevertheless God's chosen people. Despite their disobedience, the Jews were supported by God and were finally led out of the Babylonian captivity.²³ During the reigns of Edward IV (1547–1553) and Elizabeth I (1558–1603), this reasoning was widespread among such English Protestant preachers as Anthony Gilby (1510–1585) and Hugh Latimer (d. 1583).²⁴ After the events that followed the Iconoclasm of 1566, Lucas D'Heere and his wife had to leave Ghent and spent approximately ten years as refugees in London.²⁵ D'Heere served as an elder in the Dutch church, Austin Friars, founded in 1550 by King Edward VI to provide the Netherlandish refugees with their own parish, and there he must have encountered the English Protestants' identification of themselves with the Israelites.

Opting for Gideon Rather Than Joshua

The choice of Gideon as an Old Testament hero and example for Francis of Anjou deserves to be examined more closely, because this subject was selected only five days before the duke arrived in Ghent. On August 15, Lucas de Heere asked the chamber of rhetoricians to change one of the subjects that had been initially planned. Instead of showing the 'Story of Joshua', their stage should now represent the 'Story of Gideon'.²⁶ What caused de Heere to substitute Gideon for Joshua only five days before the arrival of the duke? Joshua was undoubtedly one of the most prominent

koning van Spanje, 17 september 1584 (Ghent: 1984); Bruaene A.-L. van "Une république religieuse devenue citadelle", in Boone M. – Deneckere G. (eds), *Gand, ville de tous les temps* (Brussels: 2010) 98–120. The Ghent citizens are nick-named 'noose bearers' (*stroopendragers*) and proudly recall their history of rebellion and repentance.

²³ For Calvinists in exile see, for instance, Pol F. van der, *Mosterdzaad in Ballingschap. Over christelijke identiteit en geloofsrepressie in de Nederlanden* (Kampen: 2007) 197. I am grateful to Guido Marnef for pointing me to this study.

²⁴ Davies, *A Religion of the Word* XVI, 188–190.

²⁵ Waterschoot, "Leven en Betekenis" 54–81.

²⁶ *Ibidem* 106; De Heere also increased the number of stages from three to five.

Old Testament warriors, who had gained fame by conquering Jericho and Canaan. As one of the three Jewish Worthies, he was the peer of King David and Judas Maccabeus (fig. 4), any of whom would have been a suitable choice to feature in this public spectacle.²⁷

On different occasions, both David and Judas Maccabeus had been selected as a biblical model for good leadership. On 29 December 1577, William of Orange was honored by the city of Ghent with an elaborate festive entry.²⁸ At the Saint James church Lucas de Heere and his fellow rhetoricians erected a stage on which William was represented as Judas Maccabeus.²⁹ The prince was welcomed by the personifications Rhetoric and History and was confronted with several negative personifications of the Spanish, notably Violence, Assassination, Robbery, Betrayal and Inquisition. William of Orange was thus publicly called upon to defend Ghent's old freedom against the Spanish adversaries as a new Judas Maccabeus.

In February 1582, the Antwerp chamber of rhetoricians erected a stage that likened the duke of Anjou to the young Israelite David, who was anointed king by Samuel.³⁰ The left portion of this tableau showed Samuel dismissing King Saul, because he had become a tyrant. Also in this theatrical performance, the Old Testament is called upon as legitimization for the overthrow of the bad government. A brief reference to Francis as a new David was made in the Ghent entry in the Gideon tableau, since the written account includes the phrase: 'enter our city like a David, the heroic defender'.³¹

²⁷ Maarten van Heemskerck (design) and Hieronymus Cock (engraver), *The three Jewish worthies: Iosue Dux – David Rex – Iudas Machabeus*, engraving, circa 1567, The British Museum. There is also the eight-part set of tapestries on the life of Joshua in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; see Szmydki R., "La tenture de l'Histoire de Josué de Vienne et les tapisseries bruxelloises de Dermoyen", *Artibus et Historiae* 26, 52 (2005) 99–103.

²⁸ Waterschoot W., "Introduction: Ghent in 1577", in Mulryne J.R. – Watanabe-O'Kelly H. – Shewring M. (eds.), *Europa triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association 15, 2 vols. (Aldershot: 2004) I 472–491; this introduction is followed by the original account of the entry in Dutch and in an English translation.

²⁹ Waterschoot, "Leven en Betekenis" 86 and 94.

³⁰ Loyseleur de Villiers Petrus (?), *La ioyeuse & magnifique entrée de Monseigneur François, fils de France et frère unique du Roy, par grace de Dieu, Duc de Brabant, d'Anjou, Alençon, Berri, & c. en sa tres-nommée ville d'Anvers* (Antwerp, Christophe Plantin: 1582) plate VI. A colored reproduction of this engraving can be consulted online: <http://special-1.bl.uk/treasures/festivalbooks/BookDetails.aspx?strFest=0280>.

³¹ De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François* (Berlin ms.), fol. 16v: Amour: 'Vien Prince & Duc de Henri Frere unique/ Au nom de Dieu entre en nostre Cité/ Comme un David, defenseur heroique,/ Pour recevoir de nous fidelité'.



Fig. 4. Harmen Jansz. Muller after Maarten van Heemskerck (Antwerp, Hieronymus Cock), *The Three Jewish Worthies: Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus* (ca. 1567). Engraving, 21.5 × 25 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

While it was a widespread practice to employ Old Testament figures in public entry ceremonies, Gideon was not usually one of them. Even more surprising is the fact that Lucas de Heere opted for a scene that did not show the Old Testament hero at the height of his military success. The choice perhaps resulted from the organizers' concern about the extent of the duke's commitment to their cause and his suitability as their ruler, particularly in view of the loss of the nearby town of Oudenaarde in July 1582 because of the duke's lack of commitment.³²

Gideon had been paid considerable attention a few decades earlier by Thomas Müntzer (ca. 1488–1525), the belligerent leader of the Anabaptist movement. In 1524, he first identified himself with Daniel, the interpreter

³² Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin" 266.

of the king's dreams. One year later, he signed several of his letters as 'Thomas Müntzer, the sword of Gideon'. He thus indicated that he had been chosen by God to confront the enemy. One of the banners carried into the decisive battle of Frankenhausen displayed a drawn sword, suggesting that his fight against the Lutheran army of Philip I, Landgrave of Hessen was like Gideon's fight against the Midianites.³³ David Whitford claims that: 'though only Thomas Müntzer actually called himself Gideon, all crusader theologians adopt a Gideon-like persona [...] to restore Israel's worship to orthodoxy and destroy false idols'.³⁴ While reformed communities in the southern Netherlands did not subscribe to the Anabaptist cause, Lucas de Heere's program nevertheless played with similar ideas and analogies.³⁵ In order to shed more light on de Heere's unusual choice, it is worth examining the representation of Gideon in other media, such as illuminated manuscripts and contemporary engravings.

Depictions of Gideon

Gideon was customarily represented in two contexts, in typological treatises or sequential narratives.

In the *Biblia Pauperum*, a popular exegetical manual, two combinations relate to the figure of Gideon. *Gideon Meeting the Angel* was customarily combined with a second Old Testament scene, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*. Both stories were understood as prefigurations of the *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* [Fig. 5].³⁶ *Gideon and the Fleece of Wool* was frequently paired with *Eve and the Serpent*. These two scenes were established anti-types of the *Annunciation*, the moment of Christ's incarnation.³⁷ By the end of the fifteenth century, the story of *Gideon and the Fleece* was so widely understood as a prefiguration of the incarnation of Christ that it often replaced the traditional *Annunciation* scene at the beginning of the

³³ Gritsch W., *Thomas Müntzer: A Tragedy of Errors* (Minneapolis: 1989) 102.

³⁴ Whitford D.M., "Robbing Paul to Pay Peter: The Reception of Paul in Sixteenth Century Political Theology", in Holder R.W. (ed.), *A Companion to Paul in the Reformation* (Leiden: 2009) 587.

³⁵ Calvin wrote several pamphlets and letters to oppose the views of Anabaptists, Libertines and Spiritualists in the Netherlands; see: Pol F. van der, "Calvin und die Niederlande", in Selderhuis H.J. (ed.), *Calvin-Handbuch* (Tübingen: 2009) 87–96.

³⁶ Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. Pal. Germ. 148, *Biblia Pauperum* (with calendar and psalter), Eichstätt, circa 1430/50, fol. 153v; see online: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg148/0314>.

³⁷ Ibidem, fol. 7v, see: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg148/0314>.



Fig. 5. [COL. PL. 19] Anonymous, "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel, Gideon with the Angel, the Incredulity of Saint Thomas", *Biblia Pauperum* (Eichstätt: ca. 1430–1450). Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. Pal. Germ. 148, fol. 153v. Image © UB Heidelberg.

Hours of the Virgin. This occurred for instance in the Dinteville Hours, a richly illuminated French manuscript dating from circa 1550 [Fig. 6].³⁸ On fol. 18v, Gideon is depicted as a soldier who has received a sign from God and kneels down in prayer next to the fleece. His large army is waiting in the background, ready to strike the enemy.

The south-German Henfflin Bible (Old Testament) consists of three manuscript volumes that contain a very large number of half-page illustrations, including several pictorial cycles of famous men.³⁹ The Gideon sequence starts on fol. 249v with the 'Sacrifice of Gideon in the presence of the Angel' [Fig. 7] and continues with 'Gideon and the Fleece' (fol. 250v), 'Gideon selecting three hundred men at the spring of Harod' (fol. 251r), 'Gideon's victory over the Midianites' (fol. 252r), 'Gideon taking King Zebah and King Zalmunna as prisoners' (fol. 253r), 'Gideon killing seventy-seven men' (fol. 253v) and the 'Beheading of the two kings by Gideon' (fol. 254r). The sequence commences with two scenes illustrating Gideon's extended dialogue with God. His military success is portrayed as the consequence of his having been chosen and instructed by God to fight the enemies of Israel. The red captions that accompany each image provide such explanatory comments as 'How the angel of the Lord appears to Gideon and tells him that he will free Israel from Midian' or 'How Gideon places a woollen fleece on the ground and that the Lord shall give him a sign'.

Closer in time and space than the fifteenth-century Henfflin Bible is a series of six prints that was designed by Maarten van Heemskerck in 1561 and was published in Antwerp by Hieronymus Cock.⁴⁰ This series equally follows the biblical account very closely, but puts the emphasis on

³⁸ *The Hours of Dinteville II*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms.lat. 10558, fol. 18v (Office of the Virgin): 'Gideon and the fleece of wool'; see Crépin-Leblond T. – Orth M., *Livres d'heures royaux. La peinture de manuscrits à la cour de France au temps de Henri II* (Ecouen: 1993) 48. Elizabeth Brown mistakenly identified this scene as Joshua interacting with God, see: Brown E.A.R., 'Les Heures dites de Henri II et les Heures de Dinteville', in Oursel H. – Fritsch J. (eds.), *Henri II et les Arts. Actes du colloque international, Ecole du Louvre et muse national de la Renaissance, Ecouen, 25–27 Septembre 1997* (Paris: 2003) 293.

³⁹ With twenty-four illustrations, David is by far the most popular among these champions, followed by Samson (12), Gideon (7), Solomon (5) and Joshua (3). Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. Pal. germ. 16–18, *Henfflin Bible*, Stuttgart, 3 vols., 1477; see online: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg16/0508>.

⁴⁰ Veldman I.M., *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700: Maarten van Heemskerck, Part I*, ed. G. Luijten (Rosendaal: 1993) I 78–82, nos. 78–83. All six of the original composition drawings have survived in the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen; see Garff J., *Tegninger af Maerten van Heemskerck* (Copenhagen: 1971) nos. 57–62.



Fig. 6. Anonymous, "Gideon and the Fleece of Wool", *The Hours of Dinteville II* (ca. 1550). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. lat. 10558, fol. 18v.

Das daz war in erloß ich ist das
 mir gescheit ist das widerst in
 manasse und ich der mynst in
 dem huse myns vater Und der
 heil sprach zu im heil wurd mit
 dir und du stehst madia als
 eine man Und er sprach ob ich
 hab frunde genad vor dir so gib

nur ein sachte das du es bist du
 da redet zu mir 9 heil stunde ich
 vnes ich widerste zu dir das ich
 denag das offer und offer die
 antwort ich daz zu dir in kiste

*Die der engel des heil gedon/er-
 steam und im vunde das er het
 van madia erlösen solte*



Gedon gunt in und so daz
 zutun vnd der daz vo
 und mach meise vnd legt die sta-
 ist in am vater vnd die beue des
 stäisches heil er in dem huse
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Fig. 7. [COL. PL. 20] Anonymous, "Gideon and the Angel", illustration from the *Henfflin Bible* (Old Testament). Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. Pal. germ. 16–18, 3 vols., 1477, fol. 249v. Image © UB Heidelberg.



Fig. 8. After Maarten van Heemskerck (Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp), "Gideon and the Angel" (1561). Plate 1 of the *Gideon* series. Engraving, 20 × 24.5 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

different aspects of the biblical story by either choosing different moments or changing the layout. Van Heemskerck's first print contains three episodes from *Judges* 6:11–24. In the foreground, Gideon is approached by the Angel while flaying corn in his barn [Fig. 8]. To the far right, Gideon's sacrifice and the angel's intervention are placed in the middle ground. The Latin inscription at the bottom of the page explains that Gideon was put in charge of the Israelites by the angel so that he might liberate his people from the Midianites.⁴¹ The captions at the bottom of each print are like the red tituli in the history Bible; they are more descriptive than interpretative.

⁴¹ Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck* I 78, no. 78 (plate 1): 'Gedeon constituitur ab angelo in ducem Israelitarum, ut liberet illos a Medianitis'.



Fig. 9. After Maarten van Heemskerck (Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp), “Gideon Destroying the Statue of Baal” (1561). Plate 2 of the *Gideon* series. Engraving, 20 × 24.5 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

The second print is based on *Judges* 6:25–32 and highlights the destruction of the cult image and temple of Baal in the foreground [Fig. 9].⁴² To the far left, Yahweh’s new altar is shown together with the sacrificial animal and the burnt offerings. This scene was not depicted in the Henfflin Bible and stresses the pertinent question of idol worship, which dominated the discourse in the Netherlandish provinces during the second half of the sixteenth century.

Another key moment in the story is depicted in the third print which shows the miracle of the fleece as recounted in *Judges* 6:36–38 [Fig. 10]. In accordance with Gideon’s request for further proof, God covered a fleece with dew overnight. Gideon is now dressed in the garb of a classical warrior and kneels in front of the fleece. He looks in awe at the apparition

⁴² Ibidem, no. 79 (plate 2): ‘Diruit aram, lūcūmq[ue] Baal, indeq[ue] construit aram Domino, et holocaustū[m] sacrificat’.



Fig. 10. After Maarten van Heemskerck (Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp), “Gideon and the Miracle of the Fleece of Wool” (1561). Plate 3 of the *Gideon* series. Engraving, 20 × 24.5 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

of God in the cloud. On the left, Gideon squeezes water from the fleece and fills an entire bowl. The accompanying text emphasizes that Gideon recognizes his role in the divine plan, namely that he was chosen by God to liberate Israel.⁴³ In the background a multitude of soldiers gathers in anticipation of the battle against the Midianites.

The fourth print depicts Gideon’s assembly of an army of three hundred soldiers as described in *Judges* 7:1–8 [Fig. 11].⁴⁴ The fifth print is based on *Judges* 7:9–22 and shows the battle itself, which was cunningly conducted at night using horns and trumpets to frighten the enemy

⁴³ Ibidem, no. 80 (plate 3): ‘Ex uelleris miraculo, a Deo [a]edito, cognoscit Gedeon se liberatū[rum] Israel’.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, no. 81 (plate 4): ‘Trecentis uiris manū aqua[m] lambentius se parat ad congrediendu[m] eūm hostibus’.



Fig. 11. After Maarten van Heemskerck (Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp), “Gideon Selecting Three Hundred Soldiers” (1561). Plate 4 of the *Gideon* series. Engraving, 20 × 24.5 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

[Fig. 12].⁴⁵ The last print shows two scenes: the deaths of King Zebah and King Zalmunna are depicted in the background, with a rarely depicted episode from *Judges* 8:22–27 in the foreground [Fig. 13].⁴⁶ Gideon, now a proud commander sitting in state on an elevated base, asks his soldiers to share their booty with him. As the text explains, Gideon had an idol made from the golden objects, thus launching a new wave of idolatry among the people of Israel.

The van Heemskerck print series emphasizes the fact that God called Gideon to liberate the people of Israel. In contrast to the Henfflin Bible a clear distinction is made between the rightful veneration of God and

⁴⁵ Ibidem, no. 82 (plate 5): ‘Clangore corūnm, illusioneq[ue] ūacūoru[m] cadomm, et facibns, perseqūntūr Madiantitis eornq[ue] principes capiūt’.

⁴⁶ Ibidem I 82, no. 83 (plate 6): ‘Pr[a]emium rependitūr Gedeoni ex hostiūm spolijs fecitq[ue] es illis Ehod · Ind ‘Cap’6·7·8’.



Fig. 12. After Maarten van Heemskerck (Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp), "Gideon's Victory over the Midianites" (1561). Plate 5 of the *Gideon* series. Engraving, 20 × 24.5 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

false idol worship. This print series was made at a time of heightened tensions between Catholics and their critics, among whom were Maarten van Heemskerck and his humanist friends.⁴⁷

The print series by Maarten van Heemskerck is particularly important because Lucas D'Heere seems to have been familiar with these engravings. The design for the stage set of 1582 was in all likelihood inspired by the first print from van Heemskerck's *Gideon* series [Fig. 4]. The layout of the two scenes is similar and the underlying message is identical. In both cases, Gideon is surprised by the angel and must be persuaded to step into action. While the physical position of Gideon and the Angel is reversed in the tableau, the posture, the attire and the attributes of the protagonist

⁴⁷ Veldman I., "Maarten van Heemskercks visie op het geloof", *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 35 (1987) 193–210; see also Decavele J., "Op de religieuze Breuklijn van de zestiende eeuw", in Decavele, *Het eind van een rebelse droom* 12–20.



Fig. 13. After Maarten van Heemskerck (Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp), “Gideon Shares the Booty with His Soldiers” (1561). Plate 6 of the *Gideon* series. Engraving, 20 × 24.5 cm. London, British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

are similar. In order to recount the entire story, de Heere merged two episodes, one from the beginning and one from the end of the biblical account. The battle scene in the background is reminiscent of the fifth engraving, in which several soldiers are brandishing their swords while putting the enemy to flight.

Gideon, a Burgundian Hero

When Duke Philip the Good founded the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1430, the mythological hero Jason was chosen as patron of the order. Jean Germain, the first chancellor of the order, however, did not approve of this decision. In 1431, he proposed Gideon as the order's pivotal figure. The theologian suggested that the order's attribute, a golden fleece, was to be understood as a potent Marian symbol which was no longer to be

confused with a symbol of heathen iconography.⁴⁸ Duke Philip accepted his suggestion and commissioned a sumptuous series of eight tapestries representing the story of Gideon.⁴⁹ In adopting this Old Testament hero, he followed the Burgundian tradition of invoking famous men as models of knightly behavior.⁵⁰ The Golden Fleece remained an iconic image for the ruling dynasty well into the sixteenth century and was featured prominently in festive entries as well as in chronicles and other literary sources.⁵¹

The continuing association of the Order of the Golden Fleece with the story of Gideon is also confirmed by an Italian writing cabinet that was given to Emperor Charles V by the Italian condottiere Ferrante Gonzaga (1507–1557). It has been suggested that Ferrante commissioned this personalized piece of furniture soon after having been admitted to the illustrious order in 1531.⁵² On the outer side of the drop front, three scenes from the life of Gideon are rendered in marquetry: Gideon and the fleece, Gideon selecting three hundred soldiers, and the victory over the Midianites. Angelo Jordano argued that by selecting this particular iconography, Ferrante Gonzaga was likening Charles V to the Old Testament hero Gideon, thus paying homage to his struggle as a soldier of God against the Turks and the Protestants.⁵³ Equally important is the fact that Ferrante was himself a military man. He was in charge of the Emperor's Italian army from 1527 onwards and took part in several military campaigns.

The association of Gideon with the dukes of Burgundy helps explain the iconographic choices made in Antwerp and Ghent in 1582. Petrus Loyseleur de Villiers (1530–1590), the author of the printed account from

⁴⁸ Pasterou M., "Emblèmes et symboles de la Toison d'or", in Cockshaw P. – Bergen-Patens C. van den (eds.), *L'ordre de la Toison d'or, de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau (1430–1505): idéal ou reflet d'une société?* (Turnhout: 1996) 99–106.

⁴⁹ The set was destroyed in 1794.

⁵⁰ Franke B., *Assuerus und Esther am Burgunderhof: zur Rezeption des Buches Esther in den Niederlanden, 1450 bis 1530* (Berlin: 1998).

⁵¹ Waterschoot W., "Het Gulden Vlies in de Nederlandse literatuur", in Cockshaw – Van den Bergen-Patens C., *L'ordre de la Toison d'or* 137–140. In 1560, the Ghent humanist Marcus van Vaernewijck provided a detailed report of the order's annual chapter that was held in Ghent in 1559: Vaernewijck Marcus van, *Vlaemsche Audvremdigheyt* (Ghent, Gheeraerd van Saleson: 1560).

⁵² Jordano À., "The Plus Oultra Writing Cabinet of Charles V: Expression of a Sacred Imperialism of the Austrias", *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* 9 (2011) 14–26; color images can be consulted online: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70502/plus-ultra-cabinet-cabinet-unknown/>.

⁵³ Ibidem 16–17.

Antwerp, argued that the duke of Anjou was a member of the Valois Dynasty and thus had common roots with Philip the Good, the duke of Burgundy.⁵⁴ His text provided an argument for legitimizing the new ruler and referred to the privileges that the Netherlands enjoyed during the rule of the Burgundian dukes. As the commemorative booklet of Lucas D'Heere shows, the Ghent entry also expressed the citizen's longing to return to the peaceful times before the *Concessio Carolina*.

The third tableau erected at the town hall represented the four members of Flanders: Ghent, Ypres, Bruges and the Franc of Bruges. The four figures, clothed in appropriate coats of arms, surrounded a female figure identified as *Flandrine* [Fig. 14]. Grasping the banner of the Republic of Flanders in her right hand, *Flandrine* crushes to the ground the Spanish escutcheon. The top of the stage was adorned with the coat of arms of the new alliance, which combined Francis' fleur-de-lis, with the devices of the four members of Flanders. Lucas D'Heere's presentation stresses the importance of the new union:

Passant ainsi son Alteze plus outré, jusque a la maison de la ville, y trouva la iij^{me} Theatre auquel estoit representé par les chambres de Rhetorique, comment les quatre membres de Flandre avec les autres provinces avoient choisi son Alteze pour estre delivréz de la tyrannie insupportable des Espagniolz et pour iouyr leurs anciennes libertez.⁵⁵

The text clearly expresses the two principal aims of the entry, namely to expel the Spanish tyrants and to restore the countries' former freedom and privileges. The Old Testament figure of Joshua, who was initially selected as protagonist for the fourth tableau, would have served the first aim but was unsuitable for expressing the second. Introducing the figure of Gideon to the third tableau vivant gave a new meaning to the entry of Francis of Anjou. The appeal 'Act as Gideon did' could thus be understood as a summons to arms by the reformed community against the Spanish as well as a call to return to the values that Philip the God and Charles the Bold embodied for the Flemish communities.

The ceremonies conducted during the visit of Francis of Anjou to Ghent demonstrate that the Calvinist community adhered to such local traditions as festive entries featuring tableaux and theatrical performances. Nevertheless, the organizers sought and found a new visual language to

⁵⁴ Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin" 273.

⁵⁵ De Heere, *L'entrée magnifique de Monseigneur François* (Berlin ms.), fol. 9.



Fig. 14. Lucas D'Heere, "Flandrine surrounded by the four members of Flanders", part of the *Festive Entry into Ghent*, September 1582, watercolor on paper, 30.3 × 21 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, ms. 78 D 6, fol. 11. Image © SMPK, Berlin.

express their religious and political ideas. While Flemish cities frequently recycled images and reused theatrical props for their festive entries, the Ghent entry of 1582 offered an original performance with innovative imagery. The historic scene of 'Duke Francis of Anjou as a peacemaker', the classical representation of 'Constantine conquering Maxentius' and the biblical scene of 'Gideon with the Angel' had no precedents and were

tailored to the political circumstances of the day. The Old Testament narrative of Gideon proved particularly appropriate to the needs of the people of Ghent. The iconographic traditions in typological works, historical Bibles, print series and decorative art objects provided numerous representations of Gideon's story. In his written account of the fourth tableau vivant, Lucas de Heere drew on the dialogue between Gideon and the angel (*Judges* 6:11–17). The stage added a visual reference in the background to the victory of Gideon's army.

The identification of Gideon with the duke of Anjou manifests the liberties that the Calvinist community took in interpreting the Old Testament. The Gideon tableau transmitted both political and religious messages to the new ruler; as a biblical narrative it became a visual weapon in the community's struggle against Spain and the Spanish.

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MAERTEN VAN HEEMSKERCK'S
HELIODORUS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE:
TRANSLATIO AND THE INTERROGATIVE PRINT

Arthur J. DiFuria

Introduction

With *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple*, painter printmaker Maerten van Heemskerck (1498–1574) and humanist engraver Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert (1522–1590) prompted discourse on a range of pressing topics encroaching on the judicious practice of exegesis [Fig. 1].¹ Heemskerck's design for his print of the Temple purification episode from 2 Maccabees retains the composition of Raphael's Vatican painting of the same episode but revises myriad details [Fig. 2].² The print's departures from its Vatican prototype provided discursive *loci* for a diverse, interconnected audience and highlighted crucial relationships between European religious politics and visual and literary interpretations of scripture. To this audience, the circulation in 1549 of a print portraying a scene from Maccabees would have been a pointed enough gesture, since Maccabees was apocryphal according to Luther, canonical according to the Vatican. But a print revising a famous Vatican painting must have seemed particularly provocative to knowledgeable viewers: Heemskerck and Coornhert brought an image previously belonging to a privileged Vatican audience to a far wider audience of potential viewers and visual exegetes. The print thus goes beyond *imitatio* and *emulatio* to embody a multivalent *translatio* – the interrogation and revision of received authority.

¹ Veldman I.M., *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700: Maarten van Heemskerck*, ed. G. Luijten, 2 vols. (Roosendaal – Amsterdam: 1993) I, no. 236. Like many of Heemskerck's inventions of 1548–1549, the print does not name Coornhert as engraver. However, its technique matches that of *The Story of Joseph* series and *The Dangers of Human Ambition*, both from 1549, signed by Coornhert, on which see ibidem, nos. 43–50 and 455, respectively.

² See *Liber II. Machabæorum*, “Caput III”, vers. 13–27, in *Biblia Sacra: vulgatæ editionis Sixti V et Clementis VIII Pont. Maxx* (Paris: 1861), fol. 1182 recto.



Fig. 1. Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, after Maerten van Heemskerck, *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple* (1549). Engraving, two plates, 36.7 × 27.1 cm (left plate), 36.6 × 27.0 cm (right plate). By permission of the Fitzwilliam Museum (M.H.-I-234).



Fig. 2. Raphael Sanzio, *Expulsion of Heliodorus* (1511–1514). Fresco, base line 6.6m. Vatican City. Image © Art Resource, New York, NY.

Prototype to Print: Revising Raphael

Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* neither 'reproduces' Raphael's painting, nor reinvents the same episode from Maccabees with a new composition.³ Rather, it falls between these poles. As we examine Heemskerck's print, we see everywhere the pervasiveness of Raphael's composition, even in many of its details. However, in translating the image from fresco to print, Heemskerck took considerable liberties. The print simultaneously achieves fidelity to its prototype and departure from it so deftly, so thoroughly, that its revisions must have been among its most important devices for generating meaning.

Though he composed within a rectangle rather than a lunette, Heemskerck relied on Raphael's architectural and figural framework. He retained Raphael's monumental setting: a grand Temple of Jerusalem interior departing from traditional Temple depictions.⁴ Constructed around a central vanishing point, the Temple's massive piers order the narrative, dividing the space vertically into thirds. In the central third's deepest background, Onias kneels before the altar praying for the thwarting of Heliodorus's attempt to carry out King Seleucus's order to steal the Temple's riches. Both images show a cluster of figures in the left foreground; the women and children who are the beneficiaries of the treasury clamor at the sight of Heliodorus's expulsion, which unfolds in a dramatic figural group in the right foreground. Heliodorus lunges, recoiling from three divine avengers, poised to fall out of the frame. The treasury's riches lie strewn before him.

Heemskerck also retained enough of the attitudes and poses of Raphael's figures to sustain the viewer's memory of the painting's details. In the group at left, both images share the prominent figure of the kneeling woman who twists, arms outstretched in a reflexive 'cognizance of divine matters', in Michael Schwartz's view.⁵ At right, painting and print feature a

³ For a critique of the category of reproductive engravings, see Bury M. "On Some Engravings by Giorgio Ghisi Commonly Called 'Reproductive'", *Print Quarterly* 10 (1993) 4–19; and Pon L., *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying and the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven: 2004) 27–32.

⁴ On medieval and early modern representations of the Temple of Jerusalem, see Krinsky C.H., "Representations of the Temple of Jerusalem before 1500", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970) 1–19; and Pinson Y., "The Iconography of the Temple of Jerusalem in Northern Renaissance Art", *Assaph, Studies in Art History* 2 (1996), Section B 147–174.

⁵ Schwartz M., "Raphael's Authorship in the Expulsion of Heliodorus" *Art Bulletin* 79, 3 (1997) 483.

horse rearing over a Heliodorus figure derived from two of antiquity's hall-mark sculptures: the *Dying Gallic Trumpeter's* pose and, in Heemskerck's example, *Laocoön's* despairing gestures. Heemskerck has even maintained the upraised arms of a figure behind the melee around Heliodorus. In Raphael's composition, this figure absconds with the Temple's strongbox. But Heemskerck has transformed him into one of the avenging angels who fends off Heliodorus's attendants.

Other smaller similarities – in both images, for example, Onias faces right, opposite a foreshortened menorah and bier – give way to Heemskerck's revisions, woven into the rubric of Raphael's framework. Gone are Raphael's smooth surfaces and empty spaces, the taut clarity that inspired Sydney Freedberg's observation of the painting's 'swiftly consummated action'.⁶ In their place is a clutter of minutiae: Onias's decorative vestments, the bier's clawed feet, coffering, fluting, Heemskerck's exaggerated drapery folds and muscles. Cacophony penetrates Heemskerck's print.

While such details signal that painting and print differ, a mere description of Heemskerck's substantial revisions can serve to give some sense of their provocative nature. Onias, altar, and menorah appear closer to the picture plane, no longer miniscule within the sanctuary. Heemskerck has also covered the sky beyond the barrel vaulting of Raphael's Temple with a lunette displaying Moses bearing the Tablets of Law. Raphael's burnished arches and engaged columns give way to fluted pilasters and coffering, making the Temple resemble the setting of Raphael's *School of Athens* and the interior of the new St. Peter's. Although Heemskerck was in Rome (1532–ca. 1537) before the new church was complete, and although it remained incomplete in 1549 when he devised his *Heliodorus*, he could have easily envisioned its interior.⁷ If Raphael's *Heliodorus* was accessible to him, so too, presumably, was the *School of Athens*.⁸ Moreover, Heemskerck's drawings of the unfinished church reveal that its central piers and

⁶ Freedberg, S., *Painting in Italy 1500–1600* (New Haven: 1993) 60.

⁷ For St. Peter's in the 1540s and 1550s, see Millon H.A., "Michelangelo to Marchionni, 1546–1784", in Tronzo W. (ed.), *St. Peter's in the Vatican* (Cambridge: 2005) 93–97.

⁸ Hülsen C. – Egger H., *Die Römischen Skizzenbücher von Maerten van Heemskerck*, 2 vols. (Berlin: 1913/1916; facsimile ed., Soest: 1975). Heemskerck's drawings of various parts of the Vatican complex indicate the considerable scope of his Vatican access: cf. I, fols. 13 recto, 23 recto-verso, 28 recto, 30 recto, 39 recto, 41 verso, 51 recto, 54 recto, 58 verso, 59 recto-verso, 62 recto, 63 recto, 67 recto-verso, 71 verso, 73 recto-verso, 74 verso, and II, fols. 22 recto-verso, 36 verso, 52 recto-verso, 54 recto.

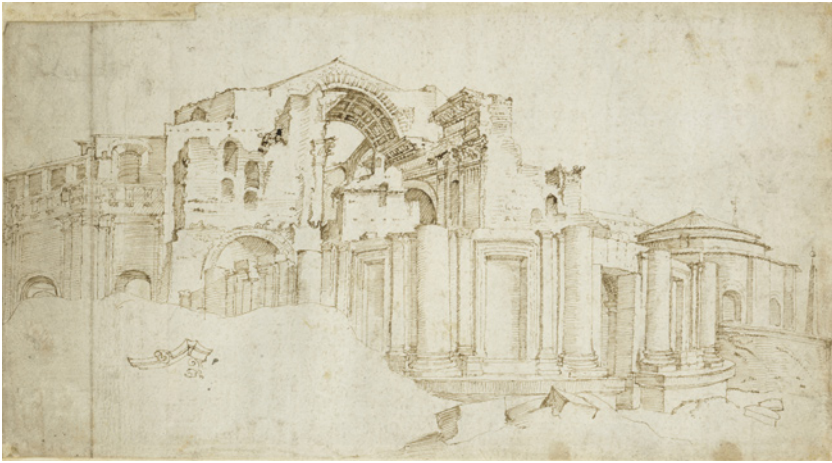


Fig. 3. Maerten van Heemskerck, *New St. Peter's South Transept and S. M. della Febbre with Unfinished South Transept Arm in Foreground* (1532–ca. 1537). Pen and brown ink wash, 170 × 312 mm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett 79D2a, fol. 54 recto. Image © Art Resource, New York, NY.

vaults with pilasters and coffering are like the ones he designed for this print [Fig. 3].⁹

Conspicuous revisions to the figures also alter content. Heemskerck has exchanged Onias's skullcap for a miter. Also undoubtedly meaningful is Heemskerck's elimination of Raphael's portrayal of Julius II on a sedan perhaps borne by Marcantonio Raimondi and Raphael.¹⁰ The only figures on the left in Heemskerck's print as prominent as Julius and his retinue are two hooded men leaning on the Temple's left column, variations on figures in the right background of the Raphael workshop's *Donation of Constantine*.¹¹ Neither sees Heliodorus's expulsion. Their lack of vision

⁹ Ibidem II, fol. 54 recto. For Heemskerck's other views of St. Peter's with these motifs, see ibidem I, fol. 13 recto and II, fol. 52 recto.

¹⁰ Scholars contest the identification of Julius's bearers as Marcantonio and Raphael. On Raphael in *Heliodorus*, see Fischel O., *Raphael*, trans. B. Rackham (London: 1964) 103; Dussler L., *Raphael: A Critical Catalogue of his Pictures, Wall-Paintings, and Tapestries* (London: 1971) 79; Shearman J. *Only Connect: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: 1992) 197; and Schwartz, "Raphael's Authorship", who bases his argument on Raphael's appearance in the painting. For a dissenting view, see Barolsky P., "Art History as Fiction", *Artibus et Historiae* 17, 34 (1996) 12–13.

¹¹ On Raphael's and Giulio's contributions to the Sala di Costantino, see Hartt F., "Raphael and Giulio Romano: With Notes on the Raphael School", *Art Bulletin* 26, 2 (1944) 67–94; and Hall M., *After Raphael* (Cambridge: 1999) 69–73. Heemskerck's study of the Sala remains unexplored. On Heemskerck's interest in Giulio Romano, see Veldman I.M.,

for the events before them contrasts with Raphael's portrayal of Julius, at once majestic and engrossed, gazing piercingly over the action before him, leaning subtly forward as if resisting a reflex to rise and participate.

Heemskerck's alterations to the Heliodorus group are likewise considerable. His portrayal of the scuffle around Heliodorus contains fewer figures than Raphael's, but his group emanates more *frisson*. Smoke billows around the rearing horse and the avenging angels, announcing their arrival in a mystical visual language. Heemskerck's Heliodorus group enacts their part in the narrative from a platform absent from Raphael's version. With this addition, Heemskerck eliminated Raphael's elegant symmetry: the group at left is further from the picture plane than it appears in Raphael's painting; the group at right advances on the picture plane more aggressively. Both groups crowd the composition's center.

Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* thus makes Raphael's composition an authoritative prototype from which it departs, thus gaining its own rhetorical leverage and authority. Beneath the lip of the platform we read Heemskerck's name, inscribed to cross over both sheets of the print: 'Martinus Heemskerc • In • 2 • mach • 3 •'.¹² With this, the print's sole inscription, Heemskerck boldly declares himself as its inventor. The print contains no mention of Raphael, putting the finest point on the *Heliodorus* print as Heemskerck's creation. This is an especially incisive gesture if we follow Michael Schwartz's convincing assertion that Raphael's audience understood the Vatican *Heliodorus* as 'pivotal [...] in the Renaissance emergence of painter as *artist* – as the human agent essentially responsible for the visualization of religious themes'.¹³

We are free to imagine that Heemskerck's changes to Raphael's design were not so deliberate. However, the notion that they could have resulted from his having drawn only a nominal study of the painting, the passage of time, and its accompanying erosion of memory ignores Heemskerck's continuation of many of the painting's minutiae. The ram's horn articulating the corner of Onias's altar, for example, suggests Heemskerck's careful observation Raphael. We may also imagine that Heemskerck designed

Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century, trans. M. Hoyle (Amsterdam: 1977) 12.

¹² Veldman, *New Hollstein*: Maarten van Heemskerck II, no. 236. The divide in the inscription appears between the 'e' and 'm' in 'Heemskerc'. The abbreviation 'In' for 'inventor' appears on other prints by Heemskerck dated 1548 and 1549; see *ibidem*, nos. 266, 271, 272.

¹³ Schwartz, "Raphael's Authorship" 467.

his departures to accommodate the print medium.¹⁴ But this neither accounts for all of the print's differences from its Vatican prototype, nor renders them insignificant. Some changes – the print's omission of Papal witness – required deliberation. One reason for Julius's absence is surely the passage of time; by 1549, it would have been inappropriate to issue a print portraying a Pope who died in 1513. The print updates the painting. We therefore must ask: what circumstances in Heemskerck's and Coornhert's ambience would have invited them to devise such a print in 1549? Further, how would northern audiences have read it?

Artist, Audience, Context

Considering Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* in context reveals a more felicitous production than we would expect of a print altering a nearly forty-year old painting. Descriptions of the production and reception of Roman imagery in the Low Countries during the sixteenth century begin with the growing Netherlandish taste for Roman antiquity and the art of contemporary Italian masters.¹⁵ By mid-century, Netherlandish artists in command of antiquity's visual aspect won the most prestigious northern commissions, a prime example being Frans Floris's ephemeral settings for Charles V's and Philip II's Antwerp *Blidje Incompst* of 1549.¹⁶ Heemskerck's Roman

¹⁴ For the translation of painted compositions to the print medium, see Bury, "Engravings by Giorgio Ghisi", *passim*; and Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio*, *passim*.

¹⁵ Recent studies of the sixteenth century northern European reception of antiquity and Netherlandish art *all'antica* include Wood C., "Maximilian I as Archeologist", *Renaissance Quarterly* 58, 4 (2005) 1128–1174; Velde, C. van de, "Les élèves anversoïses de Lambert Lombard", in Denhaene G. (ed.), *Lambert Lombard: Peintre de la Renaissance, Liège 1505/06–1566. Essais interdisciplinaires et catalogue de l'exposition*, Scientia Artis 3 [exh. cat., Musée de l'Art Wallon, Liège] (Brussels: 2006) 259–298; Schrader S., "Gossart's Mythological Nudes and the Shaping of Philip of Burgundy's Erotic Identity", in Ainsworth M.W. (ed.), *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures: Jan Gossart's Renaissance – The Complete Works* (New York: 2010) 57–68; and Bass M., "Jan Gossart's *Neptune and Amphitrite* Reconsidered", *Simiolus* 35, 1 (2011) 61–83. On the northern response to Heemskerck after Rome, see DiFuria A.J., "Maerten van Heemskerck's Collection Imagery in the Netherlandish Pictorial Memory", *Intellectual History Review* 20, 1 (2010) 27–51; and idem, "The Eternal Eye: Memory, Vision, and Topography in Maerten van Heemskerck's Roman Ruin *Vedute*", in Bartsch T. – Seiler P. (eds.), *Rom zeichnen: Maerten van Heemskerck 1532–1536/37* (Berlin: 2012) 157–170.

¹⁶ Indispensable overviews of Netherlandish artists in Rome include Dacos, N., *Les peintres belges à Rome au XVI siècle* (Brussels: 1964); eadem (ed.), *Fiamminghi a Roma* (Rome: 1995); and eadem, *Roma quanta fuit, ou l'invention du paysage de ruines* (Brussels: 2004). On Floris and the Antwerp entry, see Meadow M., "Ritual and Civic Identity in Philip II's 1549 Antwerp *Blidje incompst*", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaerboek* 49 (1998) 36–67.

drawings form a founding document of Netherlandish antiquarianism; his post-Roman oeuvre betrays his prolific output *all'antica* and his favor with northern patrons.¹⁷ This 'Romanist' outlook explains the *Heliodorus* print's *paragone* with Raphael: Heemskerck devised the print to exploit the growing local desire for 'Italianate' imagery while broadcasting his mastery of antiquity and Raphael's important Vatican works.¹⁸ The print is thus notable for its anticipation of the same market that Hieronymus Cock pursued with prints after Raphael and Bronzino.¹⁹ However, while this art-driven explanation of *Heliodorus* is not incorrect, it is circular. The notion of Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* as an emulation of Raphael's painting aggrandizes the prototype, making of artistic manner both means and end. Given Europe's transalpine religious and political tumult at mid-century, emulation does not fully explain the print.²⁰ It is unlikely that a print bearing significant revisions of a Vatican painting would have provoked discussions of art alone.

The scope of Heemskerck's transmission north of Raphael's *Heliodorus* emerges by considering how the political, religious, and exegetical concerns of Heemskerck's audience conditioned their vision of Roman religious imagery. By 1549, Heemskerck had established himself as a foremost *pictor doctus*, an authoritative maker of pictures presenting challenging *istorie* to a diverse, erudite group of artists, publishers, collectors, humanists, and clerics.²¹ He had traveled in the highest patronal and curial circles

¹⁷ For sustained studies of Heemskerck's Roman drawings, see Hülsen – Egger, *Die römischen Skizzenbücher*; DiFuria A.J., *Heemskerck's Rome: Antiquity, Memory, and the Berlin Sketchbooks* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware: 2008); and Bartsch – Seiler, *Rom zeichnen*. On Heemskerck's early post-Roman period, see Harrison J., *The Paintings of Maerten van Heemskerck: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia: 1987) 56–66; and on Heemskerck's post-Roman ecclesiastical commissions, see Grosshans R., *Maerten van Heemskerck: Die Gemälde* (Berlin: 1980) 50–60. Heemskerck's post-Roman prints number nearly 500, on which see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maerten van Heemskerck*.

¹⁸ Dacos N., "Les peintres romanistes: Histoire du terme, perspectives de recherche et l'exemple de Lambert van Noort", *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 50 (1980) 161–186, traces use of the term 'Romanism' to late 19th c. Antwerp archivists and to Eugène Fromentin. The earliest uncritical use of the term appears in Hoogewerff J.G., *Nederlandsche schilders in Italië in de 16de eeuw. De geschiedenis van het Romanism* (Utrecht: 1912); and Lindeman C.M.A.A., *Oorsprong, ontwikkeling en betekenis van het Romanisme in de Nederlandsche schilderkunst* (Utrecht: 1928).

¹⁹ Bury, "Engravings by Giorgio Ghisi" 5–8.

²⁰ Pigman G.W., "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance", *Renaissance Quarterly* 33, 1 (1980) 1–32. Thanks to Professor Gabriela Jasin for an ongoing dialogue on this topic.

²¹ DiFuria A.J., "Remembering the Eternal in 1553: Maerten van Heemskerck's *Self-Portrait before the Colosseum*", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2010) 93–95.

in Rome.²² Upon his return, he won prestigious ecclesiastical commissions.²³ His association with Haarlem's *rederijkers* is well known.²⁴ Late in the decade, he formed collaborations with Coornhert and Hadrianus Junius, two of the most important early modern thinkers in the Netherlands.²⁵ In 1548, Heemskerck and Coornhert probably began publishing their own prints.²⁶ Not long after *Heliodorus*, Heemskerck's inventions enjoyed even wider circulation by Hieronymus Cock, perhaps the most prolific Netherlandish print publisher of the sixteenth-century.²⁷ And by the early 1550s, Heemskerck had become *keerkmeester* of Haarlem's St. Bavokerk. He could count among enthusiasts for his work Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V.²⁸

Heemskerck's production in 1549 of revisions to the Vatican *Heliodorus* spoke directly to this audience, viewers concerned with the precipitous gain in tension between the Habsburg–Vatican alliance and Lutheran reformers. In the latter half of the decade, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V supported Vatican opposition to the Reformation with increased intensity. In summer 1546, the months after Luther's death, the emperor reluctantly prepared to engage the Schmalkaldic League, an alliance of

²² Hülsen – Egger, *Die römischen Skizzenbücher* I, fols. 3 verso, 5 recto, 24 recto, 35 recto, and II, fols. 20 recto and 48 recto, document Heemskerck's visits to palaces and villas of major collectors and cardinals. On Heemskerck's drawings made in the Vatican, see note 8 above.

²³ Heemskerck painted the shutters for a lost *Altarpiece of the Crucifixion* by Jan van Scorel (1538, formerly Amsterdam), and he painted a *Passion Triptych* for the Sint-Laurenskerk, Alkmaar (1538, now in Linköping Cathedral). On his altarpieces, see Woollett A.T. – Szafran Y. – Phenix A., *Drama and Devotion: Heemskerck's Ecce Homo Altarpiece from Warsaw* (Los Angeles: 2012) 4–10.

²⁴ Mander Karel van, *Het Schilder-Boek* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604), fol. 246 verso, says that *rederijkers* performed a farce at Heemskerck's wedding. Veldman, *Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism* 123–142, argues that Heemskerck invented a device for Haarlem's *rederijkers*.

²⁵ *Ibidem* 14, 53–112.

²⁶ On Heemskerck and Coornhert as publishers, see *ibidem* 106.

²⁷ On Cock's 'Romanist' phase see Riggs T., *Hieronymus Cock: Printmaker and Publisher* (New York: 1977) 43–50.

²⁸ DiFuria, "Remembering the Eternal" 99–103, describes Granvelle's patronage of Heemskerck. Heemskerck's courtship of Charles V may date back to the early 1540s, when he executed the *Ecce Homo* altarpiece for Charles's Dordrecht sheriff (*schout*), Jan van Drenckenwaerd; see Woollett – Szafran. – Phenix, *Drama and Devotion* 11. For Heemskerck's prints celebrating Charles V's reign, see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* II, nos. 524–535.

Lutheran Saxon princes.²⁹ Paul III (r. 1534–1549) pledged military aid.³⁰ By 1547, with the Battle of Mühlberg, Charles had captured Schmalkaldic principal, John Frederick I, Elector of Saxony, and forced the citizens of all Schmalkaldic cities to pledge Vatican allegiance.³¹

That Heemskerck later devoted four prints to Charles's victory over the League in a series entitled *The Victories of Emperor Charles V* (1555), engraved by Coornhert and published by Cock with Charles's privilege, indicates the ongoing and problematic nature of the Schmalkaldic conflict.³² The image of Charles surveying his troops in Ingolstadt before the war cites the Vatican's imagery in the Sala di Costantino; Heemskerck's variation on the Raphael workshop's portrayal of *Constantine's Vision of the Cross* analogizes Charles with Constantine, the ultimate Holy Roman Imperial prototype [Fig. 4].³³ The print thus suggests Charles's receipt of *translatio imperii*, his inheritance of Constantine's divine vision and favor at the outset of his campaign. Charles's commission of such imagery in the mid-1550s suggests its political expedience. It reminded his Schmalkaldic subjects of his victory over them eight years before. The series' timing also suggests that despite victory at Mühlberg, the Schmalkaldic conflict's aftermath was long.

Indeed, 1549 finds Charles's post-Mühlberg Schmalkaldic relations tense, unresolved. The previous year, he had convened Catholic and Reform theologians to author compromise, the so-called Augsburg Interim.³⁴ Endorsed by Paul III in August of 1549, the Interim codified episcopal authority in the region. While requiring the pope to order his ultramontane bishops to concede marriage to Lutheran priests, it articulated their enforcement of the Vatican's main tenets.³⁵ 1549 is also the year when Charles

²⁹ Brecht M., *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church, 1532–46* (Minneapolis: 1999) 267–299, describes Luther's relation to Saxony and the increased tension between the League and Charles throughout the late 1530s and early 1540s; also see Pastor L., *History of the Popes*, 40 vols. (London: 1912) XII 279–282, describes the growth of these tensions into hostility.

³⁰ On this agreement, see Pastor, *History of the Popes* XII 287–289.

³¹ Ibidem 358–360.

³² See note 28.

³³ On the visualization of Constantine as Holy Roman imperial model in the Sala di Costantino, see Fehl P.F., "Raphael as a Historian: Poetry and Historical Accuracy in the Sala di Costantino", *Artibus et Historiae* 14, 28 (1993) 9–76.

³⁴ *Das Augsburger Interim, ein Bedenken Melanchthons und einige Briefe desselben in Bezug auf das Interim, die Bulla reformationis Pauli III. und die Formula reformationis Caroli V., als Grund für den Religions-Frieden vom 26. September 1555* (Leipzig: 1855).

³⁵ Pastor, *History of the Popes* 439–440; and Rein N.B. "Faith and Empire: Conflicting Visions of Religion in a Late Reformation Controversy – the Augsburg 'Interim' and its Opponents, 1548–50", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71, 1 (2003) 45–74.



Fig. 4. Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, after Maerten van Heemskerck, "Charles Surveying the Troops at Ingolstadt, 1546", from the *Victories of the Emperor Charles V* (1555). Etching / Engraving, 155 × 230 mm. By permission of the British Museum (1868.0208.65).

introduced his heir, Philip II, to his imperial charge with triumphs through Bruges and Antwerp, affirming Holy Roman and Vatican investment in the Netherlands. Frans Floris's antiquarian ephemera for the Antwerp entry broadcast claims of imperial and Vatican hegemony.³⁶ Charles's increased assertions of Vatican omnipotence in Saxony and the Netherlands, the region that received the lion's share of *Heliodorus's* circulation, suggests that Vatican imagery had the potential to elicit polemical responses from a sensitized audience.

We enrich our perception of the *Heliodorus* print's currency by considering debates over canonicity that culminated in the 1540s. In his *Wittenberg Bible*, Martin Luther had deemed apocryphal the books from

³⁶ Meadow, "Ritual and Civic Identity" 42–67.

the Septuagint that appeared only in Koine Greek, not in Hebrew.³⁷ The apocrypha included all three books of Maccabees. Rather than eschewing them entirely, Luther sequenced them between his Old and New Testaments with the prefatory assessment that they were 'not equal to the Holy Scriptures [...] [but] profitable and good to read'.³⁸ His writings from the period, however, reveal his dim view of 2 Maccabees in particular, which he remarked should be 'thrown out'.³⁹ With the convening of the Council of Trent in 1546, not long after Luther's death, the Vatican responded: without mentioning Luther, the Council confirmed the canonical status of all the books of the Septuagint, including Maccabees.⁴⁰

These intertwined political and scriptural conflicts make crucial Coornhert's likely status as a collaborator on *Heliodorus* and his status as a nascent religious critic at the time of its publication.⁴¹ In his mature phase, Coornhert advocated tolerance and an 'invisible church' comprised of the right-thinking members in every denomination.⁴² He was therefore frequently at loggerheads with both Roman Catholics and reformers. Like Heemskerck, he never renounced his Catholicism. Though he saw the Catholic Church as the only one with divine attestation, he was vocal against religious tyranny from any quarter. Like other reformers, he lamented Vatican corruption, but he argued with equal ardor that the Reform movement had become intolerant.⁴³ On freedom of conscience he famously articulated sixteen spiritual transgressions committed by

³⁷ *Biblia das ist die gantze Heilige Schrifft Deudsch* (Wittenburg, Hans Luft: 1534/1545).

³⁸ Cited in Brecht, *Martin Luther* 98.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Pastor, *History of the Popes* 260; and Waterworth J. (ed. – trans.), *The Council of Trent: The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: 1848) 18–19.

⁴¹ On the attribution of the *Heliodorus* to Coornhert as engraver, see note 1. On the division of labor between Coornhert and Heemskerck, and on who was responsible for the choice of subject matter, see Veldman I.M., *De wereld tussen goed en kwaad: late prenten van Coornhert* (The Hague: 1990) 11–13; and Melion W.S., "Book Review of Ilja M. Veldman, *De wereld tussen goed en kwaad*", *Print Quarterly* 9 (1992) 88–90. On Coornhert's ideology in prints after Heemskerck, see Veldman, *Dutch Humanism* 60. On Coornhert before 1561, see Voogt G., *Constraint on Trial: Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert and Religious Freedom* (Kirkville, MO: 2000) 18–21.

⁴² On Coornhert's 'invisible church', see Becker B., "Coornhert de 16de eeuwse apostel der volmaakbaarheid", *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 19 (1926) 59–84; and Bongers H., *The Life and Work of Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert*, trans. G. Voogt (New York: 2004) 73, 293.

⁴³ Voogt, *Constraint on Trial* 81–102.

both Catholics and Protestants.⁴⁴ Likewise, his rejection of dogma in favor of humanist inquiry tempered his un-Catholic acceptance of *sola scriptura*, which excluded the apocrypha.⁴⁵ Thus, although Coornhert had yet to issue any of his most important tracts when he engraved *Heliodorus*, the print's presentation of a scene from a book deemed apocryphal on the one hand and canonical on the other accords with his ideology of tolerant discourse. As we shall see, adherents to either side in the conflict between the Vatican and the reformers and the debate over the apocrypha would have found in Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* a topical discursive prompt.

Authority and Translatio: Reading Heemskerck's Heliodorus

A close reading of *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple* suggests that it expresses papist sentiments, but not unequivocally or exclusively. Heemskerck and Coornhert devised their print to negotiate a complex of interpretive regimes in the North. Considering the print at its contextual interstices reveals its status as an embodiment of artistic, political, and exegetical *translatio*. *Translatio* denotes the receipt of Roman imperial authority and encompasses the *gravitas* of revising that authority upon its transfer to a new context.⁴⁶ The Vatican, for example, envisioned itself as the recipient of a dual *translatio* of imperial Roman and Mosaic authorities. Raphael's *Heliodorus* was crucial for a room of images collectively broadcasting those inheritances.⁴⁷ Crucial for understanding the *Heliodorus* print's embodiment of its own multivalent *translatio* is our recognition of its core mechanism: thrusting Raphael's Vatican *concetto* into open discourse in an ultramontane context. As a recontextualized compendium of motifs from antiquity and Raphael that proclaims Heemskerck as its inventor, the *Heliodorus* print consummately attests Heemskerck's inheritance and revision of artistic authority. As a mass-produced,

⁴⁴ Coornhert D.V., *Synod on the Freedom of Conscience: A Thorough Examination during the Gathering Held in the Year 1582 in the City of Freetown*, ed. – trans., G. Voogt (Amsterdam: 2008).

⁴⁵ Voogt, *Constraint on Trial* 105–118.

⁴⁶ On *translatio studii* and *imperii* as a profound burden, see Curtius E.R. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: 1990) 29–30, 384; on *translatio studii*, see Carron J.C., "Imitation and Intertextuality in the Renaissance", *New Literary History* 19, 3 (1968) 565–579; also see Hansen M.F., *The Eloquence of Appropriation: A Prolegomena to an Understanding of Spolia in Early Christian Rome* (Rome: 2004) 38, which elaborates upon early Christian spoliation as a form of *translatio*.

⁴⁷ Talvacchia B., *Raphael* (Phaidon: 2008) 99.

widely circulated revision of a singular image conveying Vatican authority in a privileged viewing space, the print catechizes on behalf of reformers suspicious of papal imagery and provides a platform for interrogating the Vatican's artistic, political, and exegetical authority in the North. As an image of an episode from a contested text, the print also elicits discourse on the Heliodorus episode's dual exegetical functions: to proclaim Vatican authority on the one hand and to exemplify the requisite purification of the Temple (viz., the Church) on the other.

A fundamental mechanism of the *Heliodorus* print's *translatio* is its ability to raise consciousness of its prototype's relative inaccessibility. Knowing the differences between Raphael's painting and Heemskerck's print depended upon experience with the Vatican painting, a clear memory of its particulars, and knowledge of its *istoria*. Prolific printmakers in 1549, Heemskerck and Coornhert doubtless knew that their print could find diverse audiences.⁴⁸ Some might view the print without ever knowing Raphael's painting. Others might have only heard of Raphael's painting without having ever seen it. At the other extreme were those privileged to view print and painting simultaneously. Most viewers would fall between these extremes: at some remove from the Stanza d'Elidoro, in an ultramontane setting, experienced with Raphael's *Heliodorus*, perhaps in possession of a detailed memory and nuanced interpretation of it. For these strata of viewers, the print functioned as either an affirmation or challenge to their memories and interpretations of Raphael's painting and the exegetical agendas they brought to either.

Viewers in Heemskerck's circle stood to receive the print's richest implications. For example, given their antiquarian leanings, their knowledge of Rome, and Heemskerck's developing *pictor doctus* status, we can suppose they saw significance in the print's inscription bearing Heemskerck's name. This declaration of the print as the product of Heemskerck's authority signals its artistic *translatio*, its status as evidence of his absorption and masterful reinterpretation of antiquity's artistic authority. Whether viewers examined the print in a workshop or a *kunstkamer*, it would resonate with its surroundings. Stocked with art, literature, and history, these were discursive venues, what Peter Parshall calls 'theaters of knowledge', encouraging onlookers to situate art appropriately within its universe of

⁴⁸ Prints by Heemskerck and Coornhert begin in 1548; see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* I, nos. 159, 183–188, 273–302, 356–359, 372, and 329. Prints from 1549 are ibidem, nos. 8–13, 17–22, 23–30, 35–38, 43–50, 51, 92, 93, 116, 127, 236, 304, 306, 338, 350–353, 392, 393, 417, 454, 455, 508, 509.

things and ideas.⁴⁹ Deliberation and discourse over the print would result in a prolonged revelation of its richness – its references to antiquities, Rome's architecture, and Raphael's Vatican motifs, as well as to current events and contested approaches to scriptural interpretation.

Even consideration of the print's fundamental formal aspects invites a multivalent polemic. For viewers sensitized to Reform rhetoric, the circulation of an image of papal aggrandizement that had previously been accessible only within the rarefied setting of the Vatican could constitute a *de facto* argument for making such monuments more widely available to scrutiny and interrogation; but the dissemination of such a print could also serve to promote Vatican hegemony. By the 1540s, Reform challenges to episcopal hierarchy and priestly intercession had entered the mainstream of European discourse.⁵⁰ But the Augsburg Interim had also solidified episcopal authority. Considering the print's composition and scale reveals further how it invites reflection on questions of priestly mediation and of the laity's right to involve itself in matters ostensibly requiring priestly supervision. Heemskerck's movement of the Heliodorus group closer to the picture plane functions as an instrument of visual rhetoric that invites viewers to enter the image, to deliberate carefully on its parts, and to engage in a mode of close looking analogous to thoughtful exegesis. Heemskerck was practiced at devising such dissolutions between pictorial and viewing space. We find aggressive explorations of comparable devices – dramatic foreshortenings, hyperbolic foregroundings, pronounced diagonals – in many of his Roman drawings [Fig. 3].⁵¹ Heemskerck has intensified this compositional offer of a meditative opportunity by exploiting the print's exceptional scale, which offers an implied critique of the Vatican painting's inaccessibility by using the print's large scale and format to make its every feature extremely legible. Early in their collaboration, Heemskerck and Coornhert developed the large-scale print to great effect.⁵² Two vertical plates approximately thirty

⁴⁹ Parshall P., "Art and the Theater of Knowledge: The Origins of Print Collecting in Northern Europe", *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin* 2, 3 (1994) 7–36.

⁵⁰ Luther issued no formal challenge to episcopal authority, but refused to see the office of bishop as distinct from other priestly offices, citing 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7, 9, to the effect 'that a bishop should be holy, should preach, baptize, bind and loose sins, comfort and help souls to eternal life'; as cited in Lohse B., *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, ed. – trans. R.A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: 1999) 296.

⁵¹ On Heemskerck's rhetorical use of extreme foreshortenings, see DiFuria, "Eternal Eye" 159–161.

⁵² Melion W.S., "Exegetical Duality as a Meditative Crux in Maarten van Heemskerck's *Balaam and the Angel in a Panoramic Landscape of 1554*", in Melion W.S. – Enenkel K.A.E.

seven centimeters long comprise *Heliodorus*.⁵³ Its display over two sheets requiring assembly calls attention to its monumentality compared to the typical mid-century print.⁵⁴ Its scale allowed Heemskerck to maximize the scale of figures and important details of the setting, and to present the narrative with superior clarity. By bringing Onias, altar, and menorah closer to the picture plane than they appear in Raphael's painting, Heemskerck suggests their proximity to the viewer while making Onias more legible. Onias, moreover, shares the Temple's congregational space with the populace clustered at left and the divine intervention he petitions. This contrasts with his situation in Raphael's painting; relatively diminutive, he prays from the Temple's sanctuary, demarcated from the congregational space. Thus, Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* portrays Onias more clearly than he appears in the Vatican. His alterations suggest the accessibility of scripture, prayer, and clergy.

However, by giving Onias a miter, Heemskerck has complicated the print's apparent rhetoric of accessibility. Reading the print in light of the Schmalkaldic conflict suggests the miter's charged significance for its 1540s audience. Worn by Roman Catholic bishops, the miter is a metonym for the Catholic Episcopate. Thus, for some, Onias's miter could signal the print's advocacy of Vatican dominance in the region in the wake of the Schmalkaldic conflict, the Augsburg Interim's confirmation of ultramontane episcopal power, or the Catholic doctrine of priestly intercession.

Further probing of the print's Vatican allusions deepens its potential for divergent interpretations. As the Bishop of Rome, the Pope also wore a miter. Heemskerck doubtless saw many powerful portrayals of popes in miters, for example, the Sala di Costantino's *Donation of Rome*. Heemskerck's Onias thus suggests divine favor's *translatio* to the Vatican more explicitly than Raphael's. Vasari says the painting shows 'Julius driving Avarice from the church' and describes Onias 'in his pontificals', suggesting the papist vision of Onias as a metaphor for the papacy.⁵⁵ Heemskerck

(eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture* (Leiden: 2011) 391–94, 409, construes the scale and space of *Balaam and the Angel* as metaphors for the 'historically consequent'.

⁵³ Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* I, no. 199: 36.7 × 27.1 cm (left); 36.6 × 27.0 cm (right).

⁵⁴ On the significance of scale for interpreting prints, see Wyckoff E. – Silver L., "Size Does Matter", in *Grand Scale: Monumental Prints in the Age of Durer and Titian* [exh. cat., Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; Philadelphia Museum of Art] (New Haven: 2008) 8–13.

⁵⁵ Vasari G., *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed Architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence: 1879) IV 345: '[...] papa Giulio che caccia l'avarizia della Chiesa' and 'il

met Vasari while in Rome. His mitred Onias suggests that he understood Raphael's *Heliodorus* similarly.⁵⁶ But his elimination of Julius and his addition of a miter to Onias eliminates any need for the *ekphrastic* reading we find in Vasari. Thus, while reform-minded viewers could see in the print's erasure of Julius II a challenge to the Vatican painting's claim of papal omniscience, viewers with Catholic allegiances could cite Onias's miter as an affirmation of its prototype's claim, for the supreme bishop precipitates divine intervention.

Considering the print's setting intensifies these timely, resonant interpretive tensions. While Raphael's inclusion of Julius as witness to the scene visualizes divine *translatio imperii*, Julius's super-temporal omniscience operates as a metonym for the Vatican as the new Temple. Heemskerck's addition of a lunette with Moses bearing the Tablets of Law is a more explicit indication of the narrative's setting, the Jerusalem Temple, than anything in Raphael's painting. However, Heemskerck's revised interior resembling the new St. Peter's suggests divine authority's *translatio* from Jerusalem to the Vatican more explicitly than Raphael's painting. The popular northern European view of St. Peter's would greet the latter suggestion with controversy; built with money from indulgences, many saw the new church as the ultimate vanity. For these critics, its seemingly perpetual state of incompleteness confirmed its status as a modern Tower of Babel.⁵⁷ In this view, the Heliodorus story's typological status as a prefiguration of Christ's expulsion of the moneychangers invites anti-papal interpretations of the print: seen in this light, it is the Vatican that appears to be in need of purification.

Reform charges of Vatican corruption lent the traditionally important metaphor of Temple purification a potent currency. Depictions of Heliodorus's expulsion were rare before Raphael, but many viewers were familiar with one appearance in an influential exegetical context – chapter 15 of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* [Fig. 5].⁵⁸ In the Dutch

santissimo Onia pontefice, pontificalmente vestito'. Thanks to Marcia Hall for confirming my notion of the traditional understanding of Raphael's Onias as a papal proxy.

⁵⁶ Egger H., "Zur Dauer von Martens van Heemskerck Aufenthalt in Rom", *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rom* 5 (1925) 119–27.

⁵⁷ Thoenes C., "San Pietro come rovina. Note su alcune vedute di Maerten van Heemskerck", in idem (ed.), *Sostegno e adornamento* (Milan: 1998) 135–149; and Tschudi V.P., "Peruzzi, St. Peter's, and Babylon", *Source* 19, 3 (2000) 7–15.

⁵⁸ "Capitulum quindecim", in *Dat spiegel der menscheleker behoudenisse* (Utrecht, n.p.: 1470/71), unfol.; Wilson A. – Lancaster Wilson J., *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324–1500* (Berkeley: 1985) 171.



Fig. 5. *David susceptus est cum laudibus* and *Heliodorus flagellabatur*. Woodcut illustration from chapter 15 of *Dat speghel der menscheliker behoudenisse* (Utrecht, n.p.: 1470–1471). By permission of the Huntington Library (RB 104685).

blockbook edition, *Dat speghel der menscheliker behoudenisse*, the divine trio of horseman and angels brandish their swords. The horse rears ferociously, but Heliodorus is absent, his expulsion complete, the Temple already purified.⁵⁹ In contrast to Raphael's conveyance of Vatican omniscience, the *Speculum's* Heliodorus appears within a complex of inter-textualities emphasizing the state of the *locus imperii* and the Temple's purity. In addition to its invitations to consider the status of Reform, Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* triangulates its Vatican prototype with the *Speculum's* earlier convention and the audience it had conditioned.

In the *Speculum*, Heliodorus's expulsion is the third Old Testament comparandum with the New Testament scene of Christ weeping upon his entry into Jerusalem [Fig. 6].⁶⁰ Its accompanying Old Testament images consist of an antitype and two prefigurations: Jeremiah lamenting Jerusa-

⁵⁹ Wilson – Lancaster Wilson, *Medieval Mirror* 171, describe Heliodorus's absence as an 'omission' and interpret the image as 'what appears to be a battle between the armored rider and the two men represented as an angel'.

⁶⁰ On the *Speculum's* typological system, see Breitenbach E., *Speculum humanae salvationis: Eine typengeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte 272 (Strassburg: 1930); Wilson – Lancaster Wilson, *Medieval Mirror* 111–215; Cardon B., *Manuscripts of the Speculum humanae salvationis in the Southern Netherlands (c. 1410–c. 1470): A Contribution to the Study of the 15th-Century Book Illumination and of the Function and Meaning of Historical Symbolism* (Leuven: 1996) 1–41, 323–331; and Labriola A.C. – Smeltz

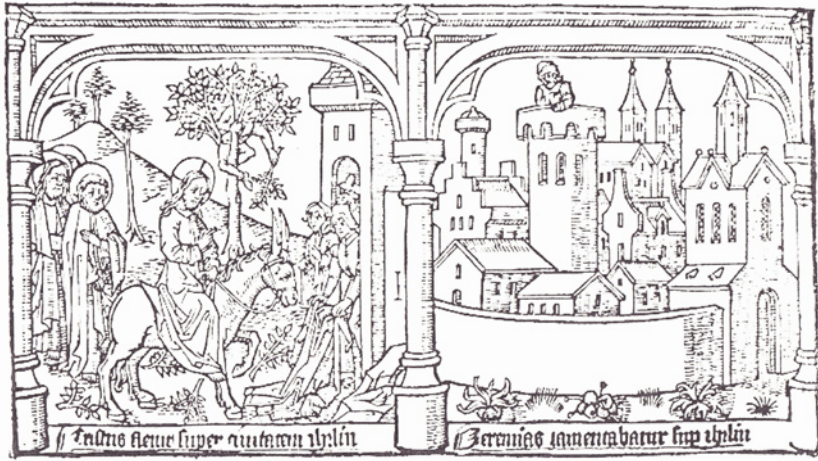


Fig. 6. *Cristus flevit super civitatem jherusalem* and *Jeremias lamentabatur super jherusalem*. Woodcut illustration from chapter 15 of *Dat speghel der menscheliker behoudenisse* (Utrecht, n.p.: 1470–1471). By permission of the Huntington Library (RB 104685).

lem's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar [Fig. 6], David's triumphal return to Jerusalem after slaying Goliath [Fig. 5], and the Heliodorus episode, respectively. Heliodorus's inclusion in this group amplifies the importance of vigilant faith for ensuring the purity of the Temple and Jerusalem. Christ's entry into Jerusalem infers the purifying function of his penitential tears: immediately after weeping at the sight of Jerusalem, he describes the corruption in the Temple and expels the moneychangers.⁶¹ The *Speculum's* juxtaposition of Christ's entry with Heliodorus's expulsion also embeds a *paragone* on the nature of empire, a salient issue in the North in 1549 due to Schmalkaldic challenges to imperial and Vatican authority. Jerusalem is the setting for Christ's coronation with thorns, his crucifixion by Roman imperial fiat, and his redemption of humanity as King of Heaven. At the moment of the entry into Jerusalem, Luke pauses to remind readers

J.W., *The Mirror of Salvation [Speculum humanae salvationis]: An Edition of British Library Blockbook G. 11784* (Cambridge: 2002) 1–8.

⁶¹ *Biblia Sacra, Evangelium Secundum Lucam*, "Caput XIX", vers. 41–44, fol. 1310 recto: 'Et ut appropinquavit, videns civitatem flevit super illam, dicens: Quia si cognovisses et tu, et quidem in hac die tua, quæ ad pacem tibi! nunc autem abscondita sunt ab oculis tuis. Quia venient dies in te: et circumdabunt te inimici tui vallo, et circumdabunt te: et coangustabunt te undique: Et ad terram prosternent te, et filios tuos qui in te sunt, et non relinquent in te lapidem super lapidem: eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitationis tuæ'.

of Christ's status as 'the king who came in the name of the Lord'.⁶² The antitype from Jeremiah's *Lamentations* portrays Jerusalem devastated by imperial tyranny.⁶³ Again, tears signal purity: Jeremiah tearfully laments corruption's banishment of familial comfort and love.⁶⁴ This is the same concern thematized in the threat to the widows' and orphans' treasury in the Heliodorus episode. King David's entry into the holy city after slaying Goliath prefigures Christ's entry and sustains the notion of Jerusalem purified, not with tears of anguish caused by corruption, but with 'singing and dancing' after tyranny's banishment.⁶⁵ Heliodorus's appearance within the *Speculum's* chapter 15 thus encourages its reader to associate the purity of *locus imperii*, Temple, and Christ.

Beyond the chapter in which it appears, the Heliodorus episode belongs to a constellation of images and textual selections that focus the *Speculum's* viewers' attentions on the Temple's purity. The altar is an especially important *locus*. Chapter 4 establishes the concept by analogizing the Temple with Mary, the embodiment of purity [Fig. 7].⁶⁶ The next chapter visualizes the Golden Legend's presentation of Mary at the Temple's altar [Fig. 8].⁶⁷ Chapter 10 again makes the altar a critical *locus* with Christ's presentation in the Temple [Fig. 9] and emblemizes the Temple's menorah [Fig. 10], its candles integral in purification rituals.⁶⁸ Other *Speculum* images sustain attention on the Temple's altar and notions of purification.⁶⁹ Heemskerck's retaining of Raphael's setting within the Temple combined with his increased emphasis on the altar and the menorah thus reinforced one of the *Speculum's* major themes while signaling a comprehensive mode of visual exegesis; with a single well-chosen, deftly crafted image, Heemskerck highlighted one of the *Speculum's* continuing typological themes.

⁶² Ibidem, fol. 38 recto: 'Dicentes: Benedictus qui venit rex in nomine Domini, pax in coelo, et gloria in excelsis'.

⁶³ *Biblia Sacra, Lamentationes Jeremiae prophetae*, fols. 982 recto–988 recto.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, "Caput I", vers. 2, folio 982 recto: 'Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrymae ejus in maxillis ejus: non est qui consoletur eam ex omnibus charis ejus: omnes amici ejus spreverunt eam, et facti sunt ei inimici'.

⁶⁵ *Biblia Sacra, Liber I. Samuel*, "Caput XVIII", vers. 6, folio 331 recto: 'Porro cum revertetur percusso Philisthæo David, egressæ sunt mulieres de universis urbibus Israel, cantantes, chorosque ducentes in occursum Saul regis, in tympanis lætitiæ, et in sistris.'

⁶⁶ *Spiegel der menscheliker behoudenisse*, "Capitulum quartum", unfol.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, "Capitulum quintum", unfol.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, "Capitulum decimum", unfol.; and Wilson – Lancaster Wilson, *Medieval Mirror* 161.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, "Capitulum octum", unfol., where the altar stages Aaron's flowering rod as the divine will's manifestation against nature.

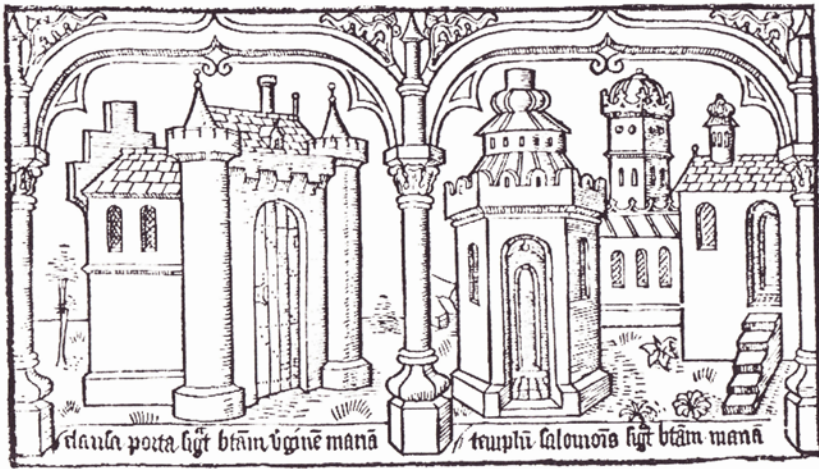
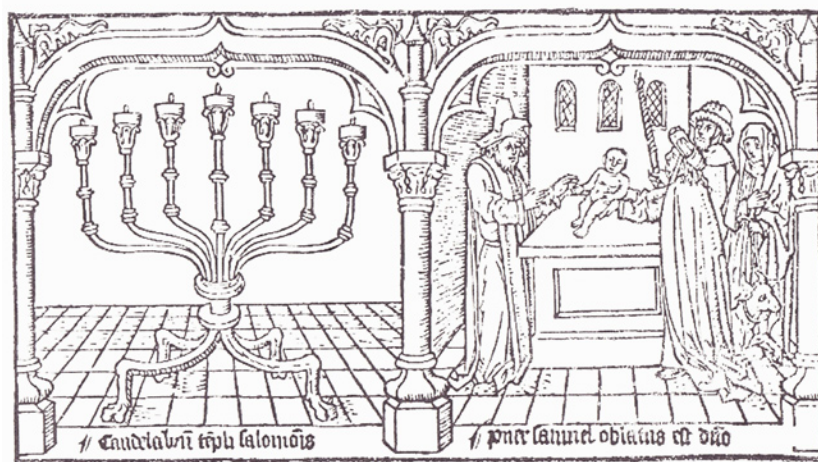


Fig. 7. *Clausā porta significat beatam uirginem mariam* and *Templum Salomonis significat beatam mariam*. Woodcut illustration from chapter 4 of *Dat speghel der menscheliker behoudenisse* (n.p. 1470–1471). By permission of the Huntington Library (RB 104685).



Fig. 8. *Maria (oblata) est domino in templo* and *Mensa aurea in sabulo oblata est in templo solis*. Woodcut illustration from chapter 5 of *Dat speghel der menscheliker behoudenisse* (Utrecht, n.p.: 1470–1471). By permission of the Huntington Library (RB 104685).



The *Speculum* conditioned generations of northern viewers to associate the Heliodorus episode with the Temple of Jerusalem's purity and the status of Jerusalem at the hands of imperial authority. In addition to its prefiguration of Christ expelling the moneychangers, its inclusion in the *Speculum's* chapter 15 suggests the *locus imperii* as the site of faith's triumph over greed. Viewers of Heemskerck's print could see its visual allusions to the Vatican as the new setting for the Heliodorus episode as an invitation to discuss the question of Rome's status as the new Jerusalem. Reformers were acutely aware of such questions after Luther's pointed publication of St. Jerome's letter denying Rome's preeminence.⁷⁰ Moreover, viewers familiar with the *Speculum* would notice in Heemskerck's print a compendium of intertextual images encouraging its placement within current political and exegetical contexts. Conditioned as many viewers were to the *Speculum's* proffering of the Temple as a metonym for the state of religious life, they would perforce have viewed Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* through the lens of the *Speculum's* typological armature.

Conclusion

We thus submit Heemskerck's *Heliodorus* as an interrogative image, one that asks how current cultural conditions inflect exegesis and vice versa. While the print's Catholicism may have been apparent to some, it may have seemed merely ostensible to others. But its refusal of closure in favor of discourse is not a weakness, a corrupting of Raphael's unified *istoria*. Interpretative resolution does not appear to have been its main objective. Rather, the print interrogated viewers. Compared to the unquestionably celebratory tone of Heemskerck's imperially commissioned *Victories* series of 1555, *Heliodorus* appears as a broader response to the unsettled milieu of 1549.

Heliodorus is not the first Heemskerck invention that scholars have described as equivocal. David Freedberg noted the elusiveness of the artist's view of the image debate in prints showing idol destruction.⁷¹ Walter

⁷⁰ Brecht, *Martin Luther* 191.

⁷¹ Freedberg D., "The Problem of Images in Northern Europe and its Repercussions in the Netherlands", *Hafnia: Copenhagen Papers in the History of Art* [Proceedings of the 7th International Colloquium in the History of Art] (1976) 25–45. On the equivocal nature of Heemskerck's prints showing idol and temple destruction, also see Saunders E., "A Commentary on Several Print Series by Maarten van Heemskerck", *Simiolus* 10, 2 (1978–79) 59–83.

Melion has argued that Heemskerck's *Balaam and the Angel* used moral ambiguity to prompt viewers to reflect on the nature of the Incarnation.⁷² Despite Heemskerck's lifelong Catholicism, Horst Bredekamp described anti-papal imagery in Heemskerck's *Story of Josia* series.⁷³ Similarly, Ernst Gombrich's insightful observation of a passive pope in Heemskerck's *Roman Panorama with the Good Samaritan* perhaps encourages us to see *Heliodorus*'s disinterested robed figures as a reversal of Raphael's riveted Julius.⁷⁴ And yet, Onias's papal vestments would seem to deny such partisan interpretations.

We have only managed to suggest some of the *Heliodorus* print's interpretive possibilities and functions. While northern papists would welcome Vatican imagery, those with Reform sympathies could have seized upon the print as a way of feigning allegiance to the Vatican and deflecting the imperial pressure brought to bear after the battle of Mühlberg. Due to this same context, the print's inscription identifying its source by book and chapter played to ultramontane sensitivities regarding the canonicity of Maccabees. Finally, the print extols the visualization of biblical text via close looking and referentiality, analogs to close reading and typology. Thus, Heemskerck's *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple* interrogates the very nature of judicious exegesis.

⁷² Melion, "Exegetical Duality" 393.

⁷³ Bredekamp H., "Maarten van Heemskercks Bildersturmzyklen als Angriff auf Rom", in Scribner R. – Warnke M. (eds.), *Bilder und Bildersturm in Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: 1990) 207–245.

⁷⁴ Gombrich E.H., "Archaeologists or Pharisees? Reflections on a Painting by Maarten van Heemskerck", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 54 (1991) 253–256.

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OF CHURCHES, HERETICS, AND OTHER GUIDES OF THE BLIND:
THE FALL OF THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND BY PIETER BRUEGEL
THE ELDER AND THE ESTHETICS OF SUBVERSION*

Jürgen Müller

Heresy in Pictures

Pictures are a medium of biblical exegesis. By illustrating biblical subjects, they provide a specific interpretation of selected passages, clarifying and disambiguating by means of images, even where Scripture is vague or obscure. This is due first of all to the nature of the texts in the Old and New Testaments: one rarely encounters descriptions of persons and events vivid enough to function as precise templates for pictorial compositions. Pictures, on the other hand, are subject to the necessity of putting something in concrete form; as such, they require legitimization and are potentially instruments of codification.¹

During the Reformation pictures were used to canonize religious viewpoints and to give expression to various orthodoxies, but also to denounce the heterodoxy of the opposing side. But whatever their function in religious practice may have been, as a rule they operated as vehicles of disambiguation. Luther, in particular, valued pictures as a pedagogical tool and took a critical stance against the iconoclasts.² For him, their essential purpose was to teach, simply and clearly.³

* Translated from German to English by Rosemarie Greenman and edited by Walter Melion.

¹ Cf. Scribner R.W., "Reformatorsche Bildpropaganda", *Historische Bildkunde* 12 (1991) 83–106.

² Cf. Berns J.J., "Die Macht der äußeren und der inneren Bilder. Momente des innerprotestantischen Bilderstreits während der Reformation", in Battafarano I.M. (ed.), *Begrifflichkeit und Bildlichkeit der Reformation* (Bern: 1992) 9–37.

³ For a general overview, see Hofmann W. (ed.), *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst* [exh. cat., Hamburger Kunsthalle] (Munich: 1983); Warnke C.P., *Sprechende Bilder, sichtbare Worte. Das Bildverständnis in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: 1987); Bergmann R., "A tröstlich Picture: Luther's Attitude in the Question of Images", *Renaissance and Reformation* 5 (1981) 15–25; and Münch B.U., *Geteiltes Leid. Die Passion Christi in Bildern und Texten der Konfessionalisierung. Druckgraphik von der Reformation bis zu den jesuitischen Großprojekten um 1600* (Regensburg: 2009) 51–53.

In the following remarks, I would like to explore the reverse case and present pictures as agents of subversion. For the interpreter this involves a search not for certainty, but for ambiguity or equivocality. In this context, semantic ambivalence is not to be construed as an expression of a modern concept of art in the sense of Umberto Eco's *Open Work*; rather, it signifies that a heterodox meaning is hidden or, better, embedded in the pictures. Thus my first thesis is that subversive pictures contain both an esoteric and an exoteric meaning. They address a group that would have been familiar with the practice of religious *dissimulatio* and capable of distinguishing between the actual and the spurious message.⁴

I shall utilize two pictures by Pieter Bruegel to illustrate this hypothesis of religious *dissimulatio*, both of which deal with the subject of religious deviance. To this end, I will first need to introduce Sebastian Brant's thoughts regarding 'religious pertinacity' in the *Ship of Fools* [Fig. 1]. Then I will analyze Bruegel's panel *The Peasant and the Birdnester* [Fig. 2] and his *Tüchlein* (glue-tempera painting) *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*, dating from 1568 and addressing complementary issues [Fig. 3]. My aim is to show that these pictures, rather than taking an orthodox position, instead espouse the point of view of the 'deviationists' in a manner full of allusions.

Until now, little attention has been paid to the fact that Sebastian Brant in his 1494 *Ship of Fools* devoted a chapter to religious pertinacity. Accordingly, the Early New High German title of chapter 36 is 'Eygenrichtikeit' (pertinacity; literally, self-righteousness) [Fig. 1].⁵ The illustration shows a foolish nest robber falling from a tree top; the ground is strewn with dying birds thrown from their nests by the careless thief. The associated verse reads as follows: 'Whoever wants to fly away following his own mind / Trying to get bird-nests, / Will often find himself lying on the ground'. ('Wer will auf eignen Sinn ausfliegen / Und Vogelnnester sucht zu kriegen, / Der wird oft auf der Erde liegen'.)⁶ The invention of this curious allegory is attributed to Brant, but the question, does this allegory refer

⁴ I refer to my own research here: Müller J., *Das Paradox als Bildform. Studien zur Ikonologie Pieter Bruegels d. Ä.* (Munich: 1999); and idem, "Ein anderer Laokoon – Die Geburt ästhetischer Subversion aus dem Geist der Reformation", in Kellner B. – Müller J.D. – Strohschneider P. (eds.), *Erzählen und Episteme: Literaturgeschichte des späten 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin-New York: 2011) 389–455.

⁵ Brant S., *Narrenschiff*, ed. F. Zarncke (Darmstadt: 1964). See also Knappe J. – Wuttke D., *Sebastian-Brant-Bibliographie. Forschungsliteratur von 1800 bis 1985* (Tübingen: 1990); and Wilhelmi T., *Sebastian Brant Bibliographie* (Bern: 1990).

⁶ Brant, *Narrenschiff* 38.



Fig. 1. "Chapter 36: Von Eygenrichtikeit". Woodcut illustration to Sebastian Brant, *Ship of Fools* (Basel, Johann Bergmann von Olpe: 1494).



Fig. 2. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Peasant and the Birdnester* (1568). Oil on panel, 59 × 68 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



Fig. 3. [COL. PL. 21] Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* (1568). Oil on canvas, 86 × 154 cm. Naples, Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte.

to an existing tradition of imagery, has yet to be posed, and I shall now attempt to explore it. First off, it is of interest in our context to consider how a pre-Reformation 'Schlagbild' (key image) of heresy might look.

The beginning of the text describes people who have left the right path and do not notice that they have lost their way and gone astray. From the very first verses the humanist emphasizes the pertinacity of such people who consider themselves clever and shrewd: convinced that they need no help from anyone, they suddenly realize that there is no turning back from the place of self-inflicted isolation. With the words, 'Woe to him who falls and finds himself alone!' ('Weh dem, der fällt und ist allein!') the text reaches a first climax.⁷

The fifth verse teaches us about the consequences of false pertinacity: 'Often turned into heretics were those / Who would not be taught through just admonition, / Who relied on their own skill, / So that they might achieve fame and favor'. ('Zu Ketzern wurden oft verkehrt, / Die rechter Tadel nicht belehrt, / Verlassend sich auf eigene Kunst, / Daß sie erlangen Ruhm und Gunst.')⁸ What started out as a criticism of foolish behavior is now turned into an accusation of heresy with 'Eygenrichtikeit' considered its cause, which – though the goal may be achieving fame – is ultimately rooted in the inability to listen to others and to follow recognized authorities. The subsequent passage lists examples from the Old Testament regarding the validity of the thesis of dangerous pertinacity presented in the exordium. Once again, reference is made to fools who have missed their way and are climbing after birds' nests, fools who want to climb trees without the support of ladders and, consequently, fall down. Biblical figures like Noah and Korah are mentioned. By contrast, the central image in chapter 36 is that of the 'seamless robe of Christ', which we should not dare to divide. Heretics, by contrast, strive to fragment the Church.

The passage immediately following states that 'foolhardiness has misled many a ship' ('Vermessenheit viel Schiff verführt'), an allusion to the end of the chapter where we read about Odysseus, who managed to escape the song of the seductive Sirens only by plugging his ears with wax. Here the song of the Sirens is equated with the false teachings of the heretics.⁹

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Brant, *Narrenschiff* 38.

⁹ 'Whoever hopes to leave the ship of fools, / Has to stop up his ears with wax, / That's what Ulysses did on the ocean / When he saw the multitude of Sirens / And escaped from them only through his wisdom / Which ended their pride'. ('Wer hofft vom Narrenschiff zu weichen, / Muß in die Ohren Wachs sich streichen, / Das tat Ulysses auf dem Meer, /

With the image of heretic Sirens, Brant in the *Ship of Fools* continues an older tradition of representing heresy that reaches back to the *Physiologus*, where we find this statement: 'For they [viz., the heretics], like the Sirens, seduce innocent hearts with their sweet words and impressive speech'. ('Denn durch ihre süßen Reden und prächtigen Worte verführen sie wie die Sirenen die unschuldigen Herzen'.) Hugo Rahner explored this relationship in great depth, presenting numerous examples of the use of the Siren metaphor by the Church Fathers in his study *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung*.¹⁰

One of my reasons for presenting this brief summary of Brant's chapter on 'Eygenrichtikeit' is that it is a popular source in which heresy is associated with the unusual image of robbing a nest. There is an explicit mention of heretics, which means that Brant, by implication, is identifying with the orthodoxy of the Roman Church. It is well known that the Strasbourg humanist worked to a great extent with intratextual references in the *Ship of Fools*: the impending Last Judgment, to be accompanied by numerous false teachings, is of course mentioned in the context of heresy. Chapter 98, after imputing folly to Saracens, Turks, and pagans, continues thus [Fig. 4]: 'Furthermore, there is the school of heretics, / In Prague on their seat of fools / Which has spread so far, / That it now also includes Moravia'. ('Dazu kommt noch die Ketzerschul', / In Prag auf ihrem Narrenstuhl, / Die so verbreitet ihren Stand, / Daß sie jetzt hat auch Mährenland'.)¹¹ No doubt, Brant is alluding to the Hussites at the University of Prague, whose teachings after 1453 had spread into Moravia as well. Again and again, he speaks of the heresies of the Last Days, stating in chapter 99, "About the Decline of Faith", that hand in hand with the demise of the Holy Roman Empire goes the decline of the 'Christian faith', which is being diminished daily by the multitude of heretics.¹²

Finally, in Chapter 103, which is devoted to the Antichrist, Brant turns his attention to those fools who take it upon themselves to 'distort' and 'bend' Holy Scripture. As we have seen, the description of and reference to foolish religious heresies is an important motif in the *Ship of Fools*. In

Als er sah der Sirenen Heer / Und ihm durch Weisheit nur entkam, / Womit ihr Stolz ein Ende nahm'.)

¹⁰ Rahner H., *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung* (Darmstadt: 1966) 281–292. On the topical iconography of heretical teaching, see Müller J., "Von der Odyssee eines christlichen Gelehrten - Eine neue Interpretation von Hans Holbeins Erasmusbildnis in Longford Castle", *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 49/50 (1995/96) 179–211.

¹¹ Brant, *Narrenschiff* 93.

¹² *Ibidem* 94.



Fig. 4. "Chapter 98: Von vslendigen narren". Woodcut illustration to Sebastian Brant, *Ship of Fools* (Basel, Johann Bergmann von Olpe: 1494).

this context, 'Eygenrichtikeit' is the intellectual vice that causes people to stray from the right path and become heretics.

The Subversive Picture

The following interpretation of the above-mentioned pictures by Bruegel is associated with the thesis that the genre painting typical of this Flemish painter is a platform for critical argumentation. The painter is concealing his anti-confessional spiritualistic statements in the crassness of his

peasant satires and genre pictures.¹³ If one pays attention only to bare buttocks and crude sexual jokes, the religious content of his panels will remain hidden. Bruegel makes use of a Silenic metaphorical language that hides what is valuable under a blunt outward appearance.¹⁴

In Plato's *Symposium* Alcibiades compared Socrates to Silenus, thereby emphasizing his ability to hide behind a mask of feigned obscenity and simplicity. Erasmus of Rotterdam devoted a separate *adagium* to the Silenic topos, but Marsilio Ficino in *De Amore* had earlier called attention to the discrepancy between the plain appearance and origins of Socrates and his true importance, as if he were talking not about a pagan philosopher, but about Christ himself whom many had failed to recognize as the Messiah.¹⁵

In reflecting on religious *dissimulatio*, I shall focus on the two Silenic genre pictures of 1568, mentioned above. My interpretation begins with an examination of the heretical content discernible in *The Peasant and the Birdnester*, and then continues with a more detailed discussion of *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*.¹⁶ One reason for dwelling on heretical content is that I know of no other picture in the history of art that can be

¹³ In the scholarship on Bruegel, Charles de Tolnay was the first to associate him with the ideas of Sebastian Franck. Stridbeck in his *Bruegel Studies* later elaborated upon this interpretive approach in an exemplary manner. In my own research, I have tried further to explore these issues. Sebastian Franck, a thinker very popular in his time, though little known today, both popularized and radicalized ideas of Erasmus. On the relationship between Sebastian Franck and Erasmus, see most recently: Bietenholz P.G., *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus: Erasmus' Work as a Source of Radical Thought in Early Modern Europe* (Toronto: 2009) 13–31, 69–93; and Müller J., “‘Pieter der Drollige’ oder der Mythos vom Bauern-Bruegel”, in Ertz K. (ed.), *Pieter Breughel der Jüngere, Jan Brueghel der Ältere: flämische Malerei um 1600* (Lingen: 1997) 42–53; Müller J., “Überlegungen zum Realismus Pieter Bruegels d.Ä. am Beispiel seiner Darstellung des Bethlehemitischen Kindermordes”, *Morgen-Blatz: Zeitschrift der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 8 (1998) 273–296; and idem, “Bild und Zeit. Überlegungen zur Zeitgestalt in Pieter Bruegels ‘Bauernhochzeitsmahl’”, in Pochat G. (ed.), *Erzählte Zeit und Gedächtnis: narrative Strukturen und das Problem der Sinnstiftung im Denkmal* (Graz: 2005) 72–81.

¹⁴ On this Erasmian mode of metaphorical usage, see Lupi W.F., “La scuola dei Sileni”, *Festschrift für Eugenio Garin* (Pisa: 1987) 1–20; Müller W.G., “Das Problem von Schein und Sein in Erasmus' ‘Sileni Alcibiadis’ und Shakespeares ‘Macbeth’”, *Wolfenbütteler Renaissance-Mitteilungen* 15 (1991) 1–18; and Müller, *Das Paradox als Bildform* 90–117. An English translation of the Silenus adagium can be found in Mann Philipps M., *The “Adages” of Erasmus. A study with Translations* (Cambridge: 1964) 269–296. The best commentary is by Silvana Seidel Menchi, cf. Seidel Menchi S., *Erasmus da Rotterdam: Adagia. Sei saggi politici in forma di proverbi, a cura di Silvana Seidel Menchi* (Turin: 1980) 60–119.

¹⁵ Ficinus M., *Über die Liebe oder Platons Gastmahl*, eds. P.R. Blum – K.P. Hasse (Hamburg: 1984) 311–317.

¹⁶ Müller, “Ein anderer Laokoon” 389–455.

considered an apology for heresy, with the exception of Pieter Bruegel's *Peasant and the Birdnester* [Fig. 2].

An interpretation based on such a hypothesis might seem absurd initially, since at first glance all that we see is a well-nourished peasant walking cheerfully toward us, pointing backwards over his shoulder.¹⁷ There we recognize a young man about to rob a bird's nest. He has hooked his legs firmly around the tree trunk in order to reach directly into the nest. His falling cap is an indication that this activity is not entirely without danger, since he has no hand free to catch it. Based on our discussion of Brant, we are now prepared to discover the image of a pertinacious heretic in this nest robber.

The importance of Brant's allegory for Bruegel has not been sufficiently emphasized for a simple reason: the Flemish edition of the *Ship of Fools*, dating from 1548, though it does contain the image of the nest robber, drastically changes the explanatory text.¹⁸ It no longer rails against pertinacious heretics; rather, the chapter, in warning the reader not to abandon the true path, entirely circumvents the subject of false religious teachings. There is a simple reason for this change: the Antwerp edition was not based on the German text by Sebastian Brant, but on the Latin translation of his student Locher. To put it another way, the chapter critical of heretics and dealing with the rise of heretical teachings during the Last Days, was reduced to a humanistic allegory of moderation. In my opinion, it is quite likely that Bruegel worked with the 1497 Low German edition that contains Brant's complete text and accordingly refers to 'vele Ketter(n)' ('many heretics').¹⁹

Let us return to Bruegel's panel. In the background, on the right, we see a farmhouse with a thatched roof. A horse is just being led into the barn, and the farm appears downright friendly in the noonday sun. In this part of the picture, the landscape appears flat and accessible, whereas

¹⁷ Müller, *Das Paradox als Bildform* 82–89. Todd Richardson, in his dissertation and recent book, largely downplays the theological issues, focussing instead on formal issues; see Richardson T., *Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Art Discourse in the Sixteenth Century Netherlands* (Farnham: 2011) 149–159.

¹⁸ Ethan Matt Kavalier, in his interpretation of the beekeeper drawing and the panel *The Peasant and the Birdnester*, brings up the issue of the apt proverbial sense, but seems unaware of the ambivalence to be discovered in the birdnester image; see Kavalier E.M., *Pieter Bruegel: Parables of Order and Enterprise* (Cambridge: 1999) 248–254.

¹⁹ Cf. Brant S., *Dat narren schyp*, ed. T. Sodmann (Bremen: 1980) n.p. The Low German edition, however, shows the heretic standing in front of the tree. Key to my interpretation is the connection between word and image, since I assume that Bruegel, rather than simply looking for a formal motive, intended the birdnester to stand for the heretic.

it is barred on the opposite side by tree trunks. The artist has skillfully directed our perception of the picture – before we are even aware what it is all about, our eye is drawn to the pointing gesture of the cowherd, who has a drinking horn hanging from his belt and is carrying a stick. On the ground to his right is a bag, probably left there by the nest robber. It may be intended to transport the eggs stolen from the nest. The thief, having left the bag on the ground, betrays his presence and intentions. After looking at the picture for a while, however, it becomes apparent that the cowherd is about to fall headlong into a ditch. He would have done better to apply his wisdom to himself, instead of pointing back at the nest robber who appears capable of hanging on to the tree.

In order to get closer to the iconography of the picture, we need to use additional examples as comparanda. In Brant's *Ship of Fools* there is not only a model for the birdnester, but also for the peasant. In chapter 21 we encounter a fool who wants to show others the way, though he himself is in a puddle [Fig. 5].²⁰ Brant accuses such fools of malice, since they are ready to slander everyone, yet unable to perceive the beam in their own eye. The illustration portrays this hypocritical behavior by showing how the fool stands in a puddle and yet points at a shrine that features Christ on the cross.

Another work of art should be mentioned here. The Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin possesses a drawing by Bruegel that likewise depicts a thief robbing a nest; strangely, instead of a cowherd we see beekeepers collecting honey from their hives [Fig. 6]. The beehive has often been interpreted as an allegory of the Catholic Church, by reference to a critical reformatory text, Philips Marnix van Sint-Aldegonde's, *De bijencorf der H. Roomschen Kercke*, which was, however, not published until 1569.²¹ Along the lower edge of the drawing, there is a Flemish proverb which has long served as a key for interpreting both the drawing and the panel. It reads: 'He who knows where the nest is, has the knowledge; he who robs it, has the nest'. No doubt, this elevates the importance of action,

²⁰ Milla-Villena R., "Deux Moralités de Pierre Bruegel l'Ancien à l'Époque de la Montée du Calvinisme aux Pays-Bas", *La littérature populaire aux XV^{ème} et XVI^{ème} Siècles. Actes du deuxième Colloque de Goutelas. Bulletin de l'Association d'études sur L'Humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance* (n. p.: 1979) 188–195; and Müller, *Das Paradox als Bildform* 83.

²¹ Cf. Sybesma J., "The Reception of Bruegel's 'Beekeepers'. A Matter of Choice", *The Art Bulletin* 73, 3 (1991) 467–478; and Noll T., "Pieter Bruegel d.Ä. Der Bauer, der Vogeldieb und die Imker", *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 50 (1999) 65–106. The drawing, in my view, has not been sufficiently understood. Also see Kavalier, *Pieter Bruegel* 233–254; and Mielke H., *Pieter Bruegel. Die Zeichnungen* (Turnhout: 1997) 68–69.



Fig. 5. "Chapter 21: Von stroffen vnd selb tun". Woodcut illustration to Sebastian Brant, *Ship of Fools* (Basel, Johann Bergmann von Olpe: 1494).

the deed, over mere thought. But in fact, this piece of proverbial wisdom seems well matched neither for the drawing or the panel.

In the nest robber, Brant sketches an allegory of the heretic whose pertinacity is so great that he loses his way climbing the tree and presumes to look for paths where there are none. At the end of his text, the Strasbourg humanist laments the fact that heretics have the audacity to divide the robe of Christ. In the *Ship of Fools* he opposes these sectarians who challenge the unity of the Catholic Church. What is interesting here is the isotopy of his text, which is the starting point for Bruegel's iconographic



Fig. 6. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Beekeepers* (ca. 1568). Pen and ink, 20.3 × 30.9 cm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett.

design. It deals with a fool who leaves the right and level road and gets lost in the wilderness, searching for bird nests along paths that block his way forward. Bruegel's painted image starts from this literary description; however, he turns Brant's supposed wisdom on its head. Initially, the dramatic narrative of his picture seduces us into agreeing with Brant, considering the cowherd to be wise, while believing the nestrobber to be in danger – until we come to realize that the exact opposite is the case. The seemingly flat and harmless path on the right is crisscrossed by canals. To climb the trees may seem at first the more difficult course of action, but ultimately, it turns out to be the less dangerous option. Indeed, in the final analysis the heretic turns out to be the wise one who, in contrast to the peasant, will be spared a bad fall. Another significant pictorial detail, the water lily placed on the same vertical axis as the nest robber, shall concern us presently.

Let me summarize: Bruegel would seem to be formulating an ironic statement aimed at reversal. The supposedly wise turn out to be patently foolish, whereas the fools prove to be prudent. Cleverly, the artist succeeds in updating a famous concept, since he adapts the metaphor of the two paths through life. The path of vice starts out wide and appears free

of danger, whereas the path of virtue is arduous and difficult to follow.²² The artist succeeds in creating a clever iconographic program insofar as he manages implicitly to defend heresy, associating it with the characteristics of the virtuous path, even while dissimulating this message. Yet another comparandum needs to be explored further in this context – an additional motif that serves to criticize Roman Catholicism: our cowherd actually originates in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel.²³ It is surely no accident that the artist, in borrowing this motif alludes metonymically to *the* key work of Catholic orthodoxy. And at that, it is quite funny to see a noble and fearless figure transformed into a clumsy peasant.²⁴

As early as the 1560s Bruegel traveled to Italy with the geographer Abraham Ortelius and was, presumably, able to study this fresco in the original.²⁵ But numerous motifs would have also been accessible in the form of reproductive prints [Fig. 7]. As first observed by Stridbeck, the artist based his cowherd on a so-called *spiritello* by Michelangelo [Fig. 8].²⁶ It is important to note here that the boy in the fresco points behind himself toward the prophets and sibyls. He advances fearlessly, striding forward. Although he stands on a narrow console whence his next step will lead into the abyss, he is not afraid and puts his trust in God. In the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo plays incessantly with an architecture that is impossible from a static point of view, staging both how the figures fall and are held back from the precipice. To the viewer of the fresco, Michelangelo is suggesting this conclusion: just as God's grace supports all humankind while remaining inscrutable, so too, the decisions of the Pope regarding

²² On the two paths, see Harms W., *Homo viator in bivio. Studien zur Bildlichkeit des Weges* (Munich: 1970).

²³ We owe this discovery to Carl Gustav Stridbeck, although his claim, based on this reference, that Michelangelo served as a primary model for Pieter Bruegel the Elder, must be emphatically contradicted. Quite the contrary, Bruegel here parodizes the style of the Florentine artist and its basis in the Laocoön.

²⁴ In my opinion, the Michelangelo motif is also a metonymical hint at the iconographic program of the papal chapel, in which the hegemony of the Catholic Church is expressed. On the political meaning of the Sistine Chapel, see Pfeiffer H., "Gemalte Theologie in der Sixtinischen Kapelle. Die Fresken des Michelangelo Buonarroti ausgeführt unter Julius II", *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 31 (1993) 69–107; King R., *Michelangelo and the pope's ceiling* (London: 2002); and Accomando Gandini M., *Relazioni e confronti negli affreschi sistini e nel Mausoleo di Giulio II* (Ascoli Piceno: 2004).

²⁵ Kaschek B., *Weltzeit und Endzeit. Die 'Monatsbilder' Pieter Bruegels d.Ä.* (Munich: 2012) 34–37.

²⁶ On the reception of Michelangelo in the graphic arts, see Barnes B.A., *Michelangelo in Print: Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century* (Farnham: 2010).



Fig. 7. Giorgio Ghisi, after Michelangelo, *Spandrel of the Sistine Chapel: Erithrean Sibyl* (ca. 1570–1575). Engraving, 56.9 × 43.3 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

the Catholic faithful are inscrutable. Obviously, Bruegel is contradicting this papist world view and ridiculing the supposed superiority of institutional Catholicism and its theology. He does this by selecting a quotation that is not immediately recognizable, since he is utilizing a marginal motif that – compared to the famous renderings of the prophets and sibyls – would not have been readily identifiable. Bruegel has designed a clever



Fig. 8. Michelangelo, *Putto beneath the Erithrean Sibyl*. Fresco. Vatican City, Sistine Chapel.

pictorial program. He seduces the viewer into identifying with the superior gesture of the cowherd. When we finally notice that the supposedly superior person is the one who is about to fall, it is already too late. We as viewers have been deprived of our superiority. This applies equally to the scene of the action. Instead of tree climbing, which may initially appear the more risky endeavor, it is actually the swampy landscape that proves the most treacherous. I have thus far suggested that Bruegel's panel can be understood as a subtle exploration of Brant's chapter on 'Eygenrichtikeit'. And going even further, I have suggested that by using a motif in the style of Michelangelo, the Flemish painter is attacking Catholic orthodoxy. Now what of *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*? Does it likewise comment critically on the Church?

Traditional Interpretations of The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind

There are few works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder that art historians have admired so unanimously as *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* [Fig. 3]. The painting is signed and bears the date 1568. It measures 86 × 154 cm. and is now housed in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples.²⁷ It is one of only two works by the artist not painted on wood; rather, it is a so-called *Tüchlein* painting that uses glue as a binding medium for the paint.²⁸

The painting depicts a group of six blind men walking across the foreground of the picture from left to right. The picture is very skillfully arranged: the forward progression is aligned along the descending diagonal that connects the upper left corner with the lower right. This creates the impression that the men are joined together like the links in a chain, an impression that has been emphasized by all interpreters alike.²⁹

The topic of the fall of the blind is mentioned three times in the New Testament. In the *Gospel of Matthew* 15:14, Jesus calls the Pharisees 'blind

²⁷ During his time in Flanders as secretary of Alessandro Farnese, the Florentine nobleman Cosimo Masi managed to collect some important paintings, including *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* and the so-called *Misanthrope*. Both pictures were expropriated and became the property of the Farnese family, on which see Vitali C. (ed.), *Der Glanz der Farnese. Kunst und Sammelleidenschaft in der Renaissance* [exh. cat., Haus der Kunst, München] (Munich: 1995) 265–66.

²⁸ On *Tüchlein* painting in general, see Bosshard E.D., "Tüchleinmalerei – eine billige Ersatztechnik?", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 45 (1982) 31–42.

²⁹ Max Imdahl gives a powerful formal description of the inevitable fall, although he sets little store in the iconographic details; see Imdahl M., *Giotto. Arenafresken: Ikonographie, Ikonologie, Ikonik* (Munich: 1988) 99–110.

leaders of the blind', who lead the people astray so that both fall into the pit. In *Luke* 6:39–41, Jesus asks the rhetorical question whether a blind man can lead another blind man without both of them falling into a pit. And finally, the apostle Paul picks up the image of the blind guide in his *Letter to the Romans* 2:19, to make clear that the knowledge of God's commandments alone is not sufficient for gaining salvation.

Although the painting has been handed down in ruinous condition, it has been uniformly praised. Wolfgang Stechow calls it an 'absolute masterpiece',³⁰ as also does Carl Gustaf Stridbeck, who rates it a 'masterpiece' in the very first sentence of his study.³¹ Fritz Grossmann considers it the *ultima ratio* of the painter's creativity, stating that Bruegel in this picture reached the pinnacle of expression.³² Similarly, Roger H. Marijnissen concurs with these assessments, praising *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* as the painter's most touching work.³³

Two positions may be differentiated in an attempt at a rough classification of the interpretations of Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*. Hans Sedlmayr saw the blind men ('Verblendete') as representatives of the Synagogue, in opposition to the Church in the background.³⁴ In contrast, Carl Gustaf Stridbeck emphasized the anti-clerical tendency of the picture and assigned a negative interpretation to the Church. Just as Jesus directed his parables against the Pharisees, Bruegel is criticizing the institution of the Church and its priests. In this context, he points to a passage from Sebastian Franck's *Die Guldin Arch*, in which priests are referred to as guides of the blind.³⁵

But how well known, in general, should we consider the German theologian? In the Netherlands around the middle of the sixteenth century, Franck was a noted author whose writings had a far-reaching influence. Seventeen of his works were translated into Dutch between 1558 and 1621, followed by several reprints.³⁶ Also, from the very beginning he was perceived as a critic of the churches and confessions, whose true and legitimate

³⁰ Stechow W., *Bruegel*, trans. H. Frank (Cologne: 1974) 134.

³¹ Stridbeck C.G., *Bruegelstudien. Untersuchungen zu den ikonologischen Problemen bei Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. sowie dessen Beziehungen zum niederländischen Romanismus* (Stockholm: 1956) 259.

³² Grossmann F., *Pieter Bruegel. Gesamtausgabe der Gemälde* (Herrsching: 1973) 203.

³³ Marijnissen R.H. – Seidel M., *Bruegel* (New York: 1984) 368.

³⁴ Hans Sedlmayr developed interpretation in great depth; see Sedlmayr H., "Pieter Bruegel. Der Sturz der Blinden. Paradigma einer Strukturanalyse", *Hefte des Kunsthistorischen Seminars der Universität München* 2 (1957) 1–49.

³⁵ Stridbeck, *Bruegelstudien* 262.

³⁶ Weigelt H., *Sebastian Franck und die lutherische Reformation* (Gütersloh: 1972) 68.

influence, according to Franck, could only be exerted internally, indeed in secret. His criticism of the official churches targets their secularization, no confession excepted. For him, God can only be experienced internally and has no need for mediation through priests and sacraments. He contests external authority of any kind. Even the Bible is not an end in itself for him; consequently, he rejects Luther's concept of *sola scriptura*, embracing the Holy Scriptures instead as a tool and possible gateway to a greater spirituality.³⁷

My attempt at a critical interpretation of the picture following Stridbeck automatically raises the question of Bruegel's religious convictions. Would he not – in accordance with such a heretical approach – criticize each and every confessional manifestation of Christianity as heresy? There is no consensus among scholars regarding the confessional identity of the painter. Generally, the problem is either avoided or declared not answerable. There are only a few interpreters who have taken a clear stand, among them, in the past, Karl Tolnai and, following him, Carl Gustaf Stridbeck who attempted to draw upon Franck's writings time and again in his *Bruegelstudien*.³⁸

Anyone who connects Bruegel with Franck's ideas needs to take into account the status of the latter as a heretic and the difficulties that might have arisen for the artist, as a result.³⁹ As regards Bruegel, David Freedberg has reminded us of the problem of Nicodemism, construed as a religious practice critical of organized religion and its denominations. Nicodemism, as it is generally understood, means the merely pretended affiliation with

³⁷ On Sebastian Franck, see Wollgast S., *Beiträge zum 500. Geburtstag von Sebastian Franck (1499–1542)* (Berlin: 1999); and Dejung C., *Sebastian Franck interkulturell gelesen* (Nordhausen: 2005).

³⁸ Indeed, there are great theoretical affinities between Erasmus and Franck. For Erasmus, already, the essence of the Christian religion is lost, if one chooses to perceive it as the sum of its rites and conventions. He expressly rejects the veneration of the Virgin Mary, pilgrimages, the concept of real presence in the Eucharist, just to name a few points of criticism he formulated against Catholic rites and rituals. It is not without reason that numerous writings of the Rotterdam scholar were put on the *List of Prohibited Books* during the sixteenth century. In retrospect, it appears an irony of history that Sebastian Franck listed the Dutch theologian in his *Ketzerchronik* among the important heretics, and hence the true Christians, a fact that is said to have infuriated the latter, leading him to intervene with the Strasbourg City Council in requesting Franck's banishment. Even though Franck owed many of his convictions to the Rotterdam scholar, he was much more radical as regards their consequences and turned openly against all confessions. God to him was not a privilege; rather, God was accessible to all mankind and all religions from within. On this aspect of Franck's theology, see Bietenholz, *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus* 13–31, 69–93.

³⁹ Charles de Tolnay and Carl Gustav Stridbeck disregarded this issue.

an official church during the time of the Reformation.⁴⁰ A person would feign a confessional identity, but adhere to another conviction in secret.

In scholarly studies, Freedberg's assumption has played a minor role, at best. This is partly due to the fact that his research hypothesis leads to few if any convincing interpretations. In his essay, he does not explain what kind of religious convictions Bruegel needed to hide or in what way this manifested itself in his works. Be that as it may, this does not change the fact that the issue of Nicodemism appears to have been of some importance in the Netherlands of the 1560s.

Sebastian Franck had been dead for more than twenty years when *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* was created. It would be amiss, however, to conclude that he was therefore unknown. Indeed, the Dutch Anabaptist Dirk Philips authored a polemical paper against the German theologian in the mid-1560s. Two letters dating from the thirties and forties of the sixteenth century, written by Franck to heretics who were friends, had been translated into Dutch shortly before and summarized in a small publication. This prompted polemics by Philips lamenting the success of the German theologian. He claimed the reason for Franck's large number of 'followers, readers, and students' was that he advocated a Nicodemite strategy.⁴¹ Hiding one's own Christian convictions was considered hypocrisy by the Anabaptist Philips. He stated that practicing 'false worship' was unacceptable under any circumstances, that it was not only wrong but the 'root of idolatry'.⁴² The anger of the Dutch Anabaptist is understandable since Franck had written in one of the letters that it was acceptable even for those who held different convictions to participate in the Mass and rites of Catholics.⁴³

⁴⁰ Freedberg D., "The Life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder", in idem (ed.), *The Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder* [exh. cat., Bridgston Museum of Art, Tokyo] (Tokyo: 1989) 21–31. In addition, see idem, "Allusion and Topicality in the Work of Pieter Bruegel: The Implications of a Forgotten Polemic", in ibidem 53–65.

Regarding issues of Nicodemism in general, see Zagorin P., *Ways of lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 1990); and Van Veen M.G.K., 'Verschooninghe van de roomsche afgoderye'. *De polemiek van Calvijn met nicodemieten in het bijzonder met Coornhert* (Houten: 2001).

⁴¹ Calvin likewise complained about the Nicodemites in a polemical text published in 1544, "Excuse a Messieurs les Nicodemites", for which see Busch E. – Heron A. et al., *Calvin-Studienausgabe, Vol. 3. Reformatorische Kontroversen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: 1999) 222–265.

⁴² Fast H. (ed.), *Der linke Flügel der Reformation. Glaubenszeugnisse der Täufer, Spirituellen, Schwärmer und Antitrinitarier* (Bremen: 1962) 181.

⁴³ The Latin letter by Sebastian Franck is included in Hegler A., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mystik in der Reformationszeit*, ed. W. Köhler (Berlin: 1906) 88–90, esp. 99.

Continuing now with a close reading of Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*, let me state at the outset that I intend to treat the picture as subversive. This wording may sound more fashionable than intended. By subversion as regards pictures of the early modern period I mean three things: first, the ability to encode a controversial theological issue in a presumably secular genre painting, in other words, in a supposedly everyday scene. Secondly, the subversive nature of the picture may pertain to the presence of heterodox content in a supposedly orthodox topic, so that content critical of religion is concealed in a conventional apparence. Thirdly, subversion involves the issue of religious *dissimulatio*. The artist has to succeed in hiding the *clavis interpretandi* of his work. Put differently, this kind of subversive treatment of a painting facilitates communication of critical theological content. Framed in terms of pathos, it is the function of this kind of art to support religious pertinacity.⁴⁴ It goes without saying that such a picture was intended for persons holding the same convictions, who would have been able to discern the religious clues embedded therein. Though we know that Bruegel socialized with the cultural elite of Antwerp and Brussels, there is no information about who commissioned these paintings and in what circumstances, but it is likely that they were commissioned rather than painted for the open market.⁴⁵

My question, then, is this: What exactly does a heretical picture look like? How can messages that would be called religiously deviant be communicated in and through pictures? What kind of techniques need to be employed to encode such a pictorial content and to reveal it to like-minded persons?

Genre or History?

Six blind men have banded together to go begging.⁴⁶ Presumably the group is on its way to church to play music for the worshipers entering and leaving the building. This much is certain: they missed the road in the

⁴⁴ Cf. Schwerhoff G., "Gottlosigkeit und Eigensinn. Religiöse Devianz in der Frühen Neuzeit", in Vorländer H. (ed.), *Transzendenz und Gemeinsinn. Themen und Perspektiven des Dresdner Sonderforschungsbereichs 804* (Dresden: 2010) 58–63.

⁴⁵ The most precise observations regarding Bruegel's environment appear in Kaschek, *Weltzeit und Endzeit* 39–107.

⁴⁶ On the representation of beggars in the sixteenth century, see Nichols T., *The Art of Poverty: Irony and Ideal in Sixteenth-Century Beggar Imagery* (Manchester: 2007).



Fig. 9. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Fight between Carnival and Lent* (1559). Oil on panel, 118 × 164.5 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

middle of the picture leading to the church and, as a result, ended up on rough terrain. Part of the group would have played music while the rest of them were begging. A hurdy-gurdy is plainly visible and about to be submerged in water together with the leader. The blind man at the end of the row appears as well to be carrying an instrument beneath his wide cloak, while the third beggar has a plate hanging from his belt that might be intended for collecting alms. We get a somewhat better mental image of such a scene by taking a look at Bruegel's panel *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* [Fig. 9]. At the door of the church, a group of beggars is waiting for the Mass to end and the rich patricians to come out. Among these pitiful creatures is a blind beggar, whose eyes have been gouged out, with a black and white guide dog at his feet. He is holding out his cap as the man in front of him prepares to put in a pittance.

The accident of the fall of the blind happens in a flat Brabantine landscape. But the awareness of the place of action dawns only gradually on the viewer, so completely are his eyes riveted by the inevitable fall of the men. In the right half of the painting, the late medieval church building identified with the church of Sint Anna Pede near Brussels catches

the eye.⁴⁷ The church tower reaches to the upper edge of the picture. On account of its height, if nothing else, this late medieval building marks the center of the village with its houses, gables, and roofs recognizable behind the blind man on the left. Along the horizon on the right, there are more buildings including a palace or a castle. Although the church building may have been modeled after Sint Anna Pede, the hill in the background is Bruegel's invention. So what you see is by no means a direct representation of an existing landscape; rather, it is a picture that was enhanced using elements of reality.

While most objects in the background are shown overlapping and blocked, the church is clearly recognizable to the viewer. Furthermore, it is emphasized through the dramaturgy of the painting by its placement on the 'decision axis' of the action: we wonder if the third blind beggar from the right will let go just in time, or if he will end up in the water with the one about to fall and the one who has already fallen. The staging of this dramatic moment is accompanied by a clever manipulation of the viewer's eye, since our point of sight is not in the center of the picture, but at the level of the church. The church is the vanishing point of our field of vision.

Like other late Bruegel works, this picture shows people from very close up. Inherent in it is a certain monumentality which has something to do not only with the size of the people depicted, but also with our own position. Where are we precisely if we extend the space of the picture into the space of the viewer? Are we standing above or below the blind group? This question has no definite answer. If we look at the two falling beggars on the right, we are looking down; if we look at the rest of the group, it seems as though we are looking up. This is a skillful move by the artist designed to unsettle the viewer. Without a firm standpoint we begin to falter, just like the blind men in the picture. In addition, we get the feeling that the tottering blind man with the white cap might be looking at us. In a startling way, the artist challenges our traditional notions of seeing versus recognizing, since the eyes of this blind beggar have been gouged out. He is looking at us without being able to see. To put it even more succinctly: the only blind person to look consciously at the viewer most likely did not suffer from an eye disease that caused him to become blind like his comrades; rather, he was blinded.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Roberts-Jones P. – Roberts-Jones F., *Pieter Bruegel der Ältere* (Munich: 1997) 233.

⁴⁸ Regarding individual diseases, see Torrillon T-M., *La pathologie chez Bruegel* [Ph.D. dissertation, Faculté de médecine, Paris: 1957].

Long before there were movie theaters, artists attempted to suggest motion sequences. Even on sarcophagi of the ancient world images were arranged in such a way that one and the same figure was shown in different 'snapshots' of motion. Bruegel's *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* is one of those attempts to describe an event in different stages of progression. It does so in several ways: following the persons from left to right, it is apparent that they show different psychological moments of the unfolding action. The man on the far left is still walking along confidently, as is evident from the relaxed look on his face. But the facial expression of the person in front of him already indicates a certain unease. The blind man next in line has a startled expression.

In contrast to these characterizations in terms of increasing uneasiness, the three blind men leading the group are characterized by more dramatic motifs of posture and motion, in that the fall of the leader is now beginning to affect the postures of the persons immediately behind him. The upper body of the man in the middle wearing a light-colored cape is jerked forward, as evidenced by his precarious position on the balls of both his feet. Even if he were to let go of the staff joining him to the man in front who has abruptly yanked it forward, he would probably fall, since he has already lost his balance.

It is all over for the next blind man as well. As he falls, he looks in our direction in panic. We see only his right leg, which intensifies the impression of instability. He has let go of the staff of the man ahead of him, groping in vain for something else to hold on to. Finally, the blind man on the far right has already tumbled into the morass of the canal. His arms jolt upwards; his legs flail helplessly. We can see the underside of his left shoe. The back of his head is about to be immersed in the water.

Bruegel shows different psychological reactions to what is happening; at the same time we see motifs of movement expressing different stages of stumbling and falling. Against the background of history painting and its criteria, this work is a masterpiece in the visual rendering of emotions.⁴⁹ Beyond that, and preceding all iconographic determinations, this work of art is a showpiece for kinds and degrees of motion. From left to right, Bruegel express acceleration and compression of a moment in time. Starting at the latest extreme, with the blind beggar standing on the balls of his feet and pulled forward by the man in front of him, there is an emphasis

⁴⁹ On the problem of depicting emotion in the general context of Italian art theory, see Michels N., *Bewegung zwischen Ethos und Pathos. Zur Wirkungsästhetik italienischer Kunsttheorie des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: 1988).

on the precise instant of time, which is further intensified by the men who are actually falling. The artist even omitted painting one of the legs of the second blind man, thus creating the impression of a continuous falling motion among the first two. The cap of the blind man next to the leader is about to fall off his head, yet the latter's fall is not yet completely finished. His legs stick up into the air while the rest of his body is about to be immersed. The picture represents and stages not just a single moment in time, but also compresses the dramatic urgency of this moment.⁵⁰ Put in modern terms, the last image is a freeze frame, allowing for the capture of a moment of [e]motion.

The Iconography of The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind

Since the Renaissance, the parable of the fall of the blind has been widely known. Testifying to its great popularity is the fact that it is a background scene in Bruegel's encyclopedic *Proverbs* painting [Fig. 10]. The Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin contains a drawing formerly attributed to Pieter the Elder but today considered a work of Jacob Savery, also dealing with the subject of blindness [Fig. 11].⁵¹ Here, though, the blind man is being led by a seeing person who turns around to look at a woman. Her face is not recognizable under her hat. She appears to be coming from Mass, as indicated by the church spire visible in the background. Whether or not the unchristian attitude of this woman, who has no eyes for those in need, is here meant to be denounced, is unclear. If so, it would mean that a physically blind person is juxtaposed with a morally blind one.

Be that as it may, the subject of the fall of the blind was illustrated a number of times in the immediate environment of the painter. A series of twelve copperplates, probably created after the artist's death, depicts various motifs in Bruegel's work, among them an image of two blind men who tumble screaming into a pit [Fig. 12]. In the surrounding caption, the reader is admonished to pursue his path steadfastly and not to trust anyone but God. Bruegel's son Pieter converted the topic of this copperplate into a painting [Fig. 13].⁵²

⁵⁰ On the problem of depicting time, see Müller, *Bild und Zeit*.

⁵¹ Mielke, *Pieter Bruegel* 82.

⁵² Brink P. van den (ed.), *Brueghel Enterprises* [exh. cat., Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels] (Gent – Amsterdam: 2001) 52.



Fig. 10. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Netherlandish Proverbs* (1559). Oil on panel, 117 × 163 cm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie.



Fig. 11. Jacob Savery, *The Blind* (1562). Pen and brown ink over black chalk, 192 × 310 mm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett.



Fig. 12. Jan Wierix (?), after Pieter Bruegel the Elder (?), "The Parable of the Blind", from the series *Twelve Flemish Proverbs* (1568). Engraving, Ø 17.7 cm. Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, Graphische Sammlung.

The fact that Bruegel's conception of blind men falling was famous and encouraged imitation by other artists is evidenced by a painting by Maerten van Cleve, in which the motif of the blind who has fallen into a canal is repeated almost verbatim [Fig. 14]. The woman behind the blind men – clearly a reference to the Berlin drawing – also makes it obvious that this is nothing but a pastiche of Bruegel motifs. But in contrast to the *Fall of the Blind* in Naples, the last blind man in the group is a pilgrim of St. James, identified as a Catholic by his scallop shell badge.⁵³

⁵³ On the symbolism of pilgrims, see Ohler N., *Pilgerstab und Jakobsmuschel. Wallfahren in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Düsseldorf – Zurich: 2003) 82–84.



Fig. 13. Pieter Bruegel the Younger, *The Parable of the Blind* (before 1616). Oil on panel, Ø 19 cm. Prague, National Gallery.

Finally, looking for models that might have inspired and influenced Bruegel's picture, a number of works need to be mentioned. Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* of 1494 once again offers an important starting point. In the final verses of chapter 39, the image of the fall of the blind is evoked with the words, 'Whoever sees a fool fall hard / And still does not take care / Touches the beard of a fool'. ('Wer sicht eyn narren fallen hart / Und er sich dennoch nit bewart / Der griffet eym narren an den bart'.)⁵⁴ It goes on to say that one can daily observe the fall of fools unaware that they themselves are to blame: 'One blind person calls the other blind / Though both of them have fallen / [...]'. ('Eyn blynd den andern schyltet blyndt /

⁵⁴ Brant, *Narrenschiff* 42.



Fig. 14. Maerten van Cleve, *The Parable of the Blind* (after 1568). Oil on panel, 62 × 84 cm. Private collection.

Wie wol sie beid gefallen synt / [...]’⁵⁵ The associated illustration also depicts the fall of the blind, though in this instance they appear to have stumbled over each other rather than into a pit. Another early representation can be found in the *Haywain Triptych* by Hieronymus Bosch [Fig. 15]; in the bottom left corner of the central panel, we see a man with a child on his back being led by a boy. Larry Silver, among other recent interpreters, has pointed this out and identified the man as blind.⁵⁶ But no matter how one interprets this scene, immediately next to it, vices are featured that undoubtedly apply to this strange pair as well.

Blind beggars can also be found in a representation of *Hope*, or *Spes*, by Heinrich Vogtherr dating from the year 1545, which features scenes and persons in need of hope, as explained by the accompanying text [Fig. 16]. An illustration of the *Gospel of Luke* by Hans Brosamer includes the fall of the blind [Fig. 17]. While Christ preaches to his disciples in the foreground, two blind men can be seen falling down on the right, and on

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Silver L., *Hieronymus Bosch* (Munich: 2006) 264.



Fig. 15. Hieronymus Bosch, *Haywain Tryptich* (ca. 1500). Oil on panel, 135 × 90 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

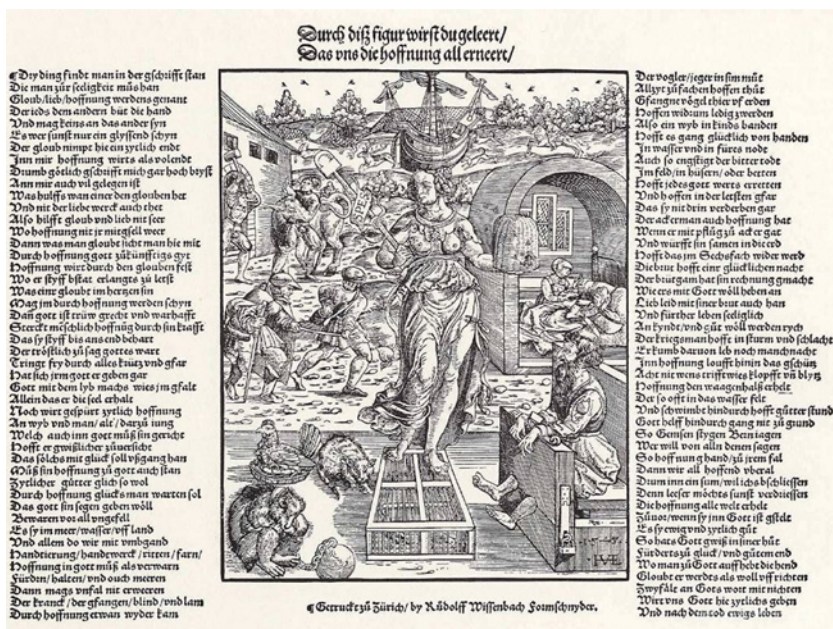


Fig. 16. Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder, *Hope* (1545). Woodcut, 23.5 × 33.4 cm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett.

the opposite side, the parable of the mote and the beam is illustrated. Virgil Solis also treated this topic in a similar manner. In the center, we can once again identify two blind men falling into a pit [Fig. 18]. The artist was particularly successful in visualizing the evocative power of the words of Jesus: he seems to produce the 'images' before the very eyes of his disciples. Whether Bruegel was familiar with all of these pictures remains an open question, however.

But before we pursue the subject of Bruegel's models and their importance for the artist any further, we need to turn our attention to the copies of the picture because they are essential for understanding it properly.⁵⁷ Anyone who has ever had an opportunity to study the painting in Naples up close will have noticed the blurred outline of the upper body of a man in front of the church. Due to improper cleaning of the canvas, the top paint layers have suffered serious abrasion, and as a result, some motifs have been rendered barely perceptible. The original body of motives can

⁵⁷ This has been established in the secondary literature for quite some time. On the aesthetic issue of pictorial form, see Sedlmayr, "Pieter Bruegel" 319–321.



Fig. 17. Hans Brosamer, *Illustration to Luke 6:39–41* (ca. 1520–1554). Woodcut, 10.5 × 14.1 cm. Location unknown.

be reconstructed only by comparing *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* with copies of the work housed in Paris, Parma, and Vaduz. In doing so, we notice that in the meadow between the church and the blind men there is a man leaning on his staff, who looks toward the group of the blind while herding geese and cows, all the while unaware that one of his cows has wandered off and is about to tumble into a canal. In order to take a drink, it is leaning forward so far that it will fall in at any moment.

The fall of the blind has a thematic counterpart in the fall of the animal; for the viewer, this offers an analogy that permits the identification of the inattentive (viz., faithless) cowherd with the Church. This provides additional support for Stridbeck's thesis that the painting criticizes the Church. In the context of Stridbeck's interpretation, an engraving by Antonius Wierix deserves mention here; it was executed ten years after Bruegel's painting and also has negative examples of false shepherds as its subject [Fig. 19]. It is informative insofar as there are two blind men recognizable in the foreground, who have left the right road and are falling into a pond. In addition, let me point to the withered and warped tree in front of the church, which contrasts with the flowering trees around it.



Fig. 18. Virgil Solis, "Luke 6:3", plate 3 of *Scenes from the New Testament*. Engraving and etching, ca. 7.9 × 5 cm. Location unknown.



Fig. 19. Antonius Wierix, *The Blind Shepherds* (1579). Engraving, 20 × 33.1 cm. Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett.

As regards the copies, we should bear in mind that not a single one was done by Pieter Bruegel the Younger. Most likely, they originated with Italian artists of the seventeenth century whose classicist taste manifests itself in the fact that at the right edge of the picture, they added the hand that was seemingly arbitrarily cut off and raised the top edge of the painting to complete the missing part of the church building. All the copies share as common elements the tree-lined road and the downward-sloping terrain in the foreground.

Repeated references have been made to an undated engraving by Cornelis Massys as a comparative example for Bruegel [Fig. 20]. In this example, the landscape format is entirely taken up by the blind men. Moreover, Meinolf Trudzinski has cited a woodcut by Hans Holbein the Younger as an explanatory reference [Fig. 21].⁵⁸ Doubtless, this constituted an interesting source for the painter; it is important, however, to state the differences between the two compositions more clearly. What is of interest here is Bruegel's transformation of these sources. A group of intellectual and spiritual authorities, such as Plato, Aristotle, and the pope, together with other church dignitaries, have become simple beggars

⁵⁸ Trudzinski M., "Von Holbein zu Brueghel. 'Christus vera lux, philosophi et papa in foveam cadentes'", *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 23 (1984) 63–116.



Fig. 20. Cornelis Massys, *Parable of the Blind* (ca. 1544–1556). Engraving, 4.5 × 7.6 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Fig. 21. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christ and the True Light* (ca. 1526). Woodcut, 8.4 × 27.7 cm. Location unknown.

in the painting in Naples.⁵⁹ Moreover, Holbein's Reformation agenda is evident. Congregated at left are simple evangelical followers of Christ, the *vera lux*, who points to a burning candle, whereas assembled at right are false Catholic dignitaries who fall into the pit despite all their authority and ancient learning. The philosophers represent not only pagan antiquity, but also the intellectualized faith of Scholasticism.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Müller C. (ed.), *Hans Holbein d.J. Die Druckgraphik im Kupferstichkabinett Basel* [exh. cat., Kupferstichkabinett Basel] (Basel: 1997) 16.

⁶⁰ Hofmann (ed.), *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst* 187.



Fig. 22. Pieter van der Heyden, after Hieronymus Bosch (?), *Parable of the Blind* (ca. 1540–1570). Engraving, 22.2 × 25.5 cm. Location unknown.

Contrary to Trudzinski's view, this woodcut was probably less significant as a direct model. Nevertheless, it importantly serves as a reminder that the iconography of the fall of the blind was confessionalized during the Reformation. This confessional reinterpretation is confirmed in an engraving by Pieter van der Heyden that has been linked to Hieronymus Bosch, since 'Bos' is named on the print as its inventor [Fig. 22]. Two Catholic pilgrims, recognizable by their emblems, are falling into a canal. The scallop shells on the brims of their hats are clearly identifiable. Actually, a fall takes place twice: figures in the middle ground are falling after having missed the makeshift bridge. Although the picture caption claims that the engraving is based on a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, this is actually not the case; on the contrary, Heinke Sudhoff has shown that this is once again a pastiche, and that the faces of the two pilgrims are taken from the Amsterdam *Christ Crowned with Thorns* by Bosch [Fig. 23].⁶¹

⁶¹ Sudhoff H., *Ikongraphische Untersuchungen zur 'Blindenheilung' und zum 'Blindensturz'. Ein Beitrag zu Pieter Bruegels Neapler Gemälde von 1568* (Bonn: 1981) 118–120.



Abb. 23. Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (1511). Oil on panel. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Our brief iconographic overview makes it clear that the biblical parable was utilized long before Bruegel. It might be fair to assume that the motif of the falling Catholic pilgrim dates back to the time of the Reformation. One of the earliest examples I have been able to find in this regard is a drawing from the British Museum attributed to Hans Weiditz and dated sometime in the 1520s [Fig. 24].⁶² The pen-and-ink drawing shows two blind men, one of whom is clearly recognizable as a pilgrim. Furthermore, the motif of the missed bridge is already prefigured here. To my mind, this motif alludes to the biblical passage in which Christ answered Thomas saying, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'.⁶³ If we situate Bruegel's painting in the context of the images represented, what stands out is the fact that

⁶² Groß S., *Hans Wydyz. Sein Oeuvre und die oberrheinische Bildschnitzkunst* (Hildesheim: 1997).

⁶³ *John* 14:6.



Fig. 24. Hans Weiditz (previously attributed to Tobias Stimmer), *Parable of the Blind* (ca. 1520). Pen and black ink, with grey wash and traces of red chalk, 15.1 × 11.5 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

he expanded the established pattern of two or four blind men.⁶⁴ Moreover, none of the pictures includes such a prominently featured church building or a scene with a heedless cowherd and a falling cow.

Still, such a great number of comparative examples have been cited by now that we are better able to describe the aesthetic characteristics of the Bruegel painting. What makes his composition of *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* so unique? From the very first glance, the subject of his painting appears more ambivalent than that in other compositions, due to the fact that it is difficult to decide whether we are dealing with a genre painting or a history painting. Although the actual source of the painting is a biblical parable, we would certainly be somewhat hesitant to classify it as a history painting because of that. Furthermore, though we are confronted with maimed human beings, they are not representations of martyrs, as would be required by the art theory of the Italian Counter-Reformation.⁶⁵

Finally, as regards the formal aspects, the artist takes great pains to treat a genre painting as a history painting. Thus, he has bridged the two categories by transferring a theme typical of a print onto canvas and changing a small format into an extremely large one. The close-up view and the monumentality of the blind men contribute to this upward reevaluation, leaving no doubt about the artist's skill in portraying emotion, facial expression, gesture, and movement.

Yet these formal enhancements are juxtaposed with the obviously lowly content of the picture: it is simply not appropriate for a history picture to portray maimed human beings whose handicaps are literally put in the limelight. Here, a passage from Alberti's *De pictura* comes to mind, in which the Italian art theorist ponders the portrayal of a ruler, demanding that a king who lost an eye in war should be portrayed in profile so as not to detract from his dignity.⁶⁶ Alberti's example attests to the demand that decorum be observed, a prescription that does not appear in the least to have impressed Bruegel. Paradoxically, the artist fulfilled all the requirements of a history painting and nevertheless did not create one. Ultimately, the question of whether we are dealing with a history painting

⁶⁴ Sudhoff, *Ikonographische Untersuchungen zur 'Blindenheilung' und zum 'Blindensturz'* 137.

⁶⁵ Cf. here the detailed list of sources regarding Italian Cinquecento art theory in Settis S., *Laocoonte. Fama e stile* (Rome: 1999).

⁶⁶ Alberti L.B., *Della Pittura – Über die Malkunst*, eds. O. Bätschmann – S. Gianfreda (Darmstadt: 2010) 131.

or a genre painting must be left unanswered. To my mind, this deliberate dehierarchization and categorical permeability appear to be constitutive of the master's art.⁶⁷

The Fall of the Blind as a Denunciation of Dissenters

It hardly needs stating that a reference to the parable of the blind leading the blind can be found in the writings of all the major reformers. The topic of the fall of the blind was of special interest during the Reformation since it concerns the matter of emphasizing one's own legitimacy with respect to other confessions.⁶⁸ Early on, in his programmatic tract *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Luther had identified the Roman Catholic clergy and the Pope as guides of the blind.⁶⁹ But in later texts, as well, the German reformer called the Pope a 'Roman guide of the blind' ('romisch Blindenführer').⁷⁰

Long before Luther, Erasmus of Rotterdam used this parable in his *Handbook of a Christian Knight*, dating from 1503. In order to make clear to his readers the consequences of a Christian life, the Dutch theologian writes: 'I have no doubt that even now those foolish wise men and blind leaders of the blind are yelling at you that you are mad because you are ready to follow Christ [...]. Their miserable blindness ought to be mourned rather than imitated'. ('Ich zweifle nicht, dass schon jetzt dir voll Hass jene törichten Weisen und blinden Führer der Blinden entgegen schreien, dass du rasend seiest, weil du bereit bist, Christus nachzufolgen. [...] Ihre erbärmliche Blindheit ist eher zu beweinen als nachzuahmen'.)⁷¹

⁶⁷ Müller, *Das Paradox als Bildform* 90–125.

⁶⁸ Enea Silvio Piccolomini, in a retraction bull dated 26 April 1463, wrote thus from Rome to the University of Cologne: 'We walked in darkness and, not being content with our own error, we also pulled others into the abyss serving as blind leaders to the blind and falling into the pit with them.' ('Wir sind im Finstern gewandelt, und nicht zufrieden, uns selbst verirrt zu haben, haben wir noch andere in den Abgrund gezogen und als Blinde den Blinden zum Führer gedient und sind mit ihnen in die Grube gefallen.'). For this passage, see Piccolomini E.S., *Briefe. Dichtungen*, trans. M. Mell (Munich: 1966) 224.

⁶⁹ A reprint of the original text with a critical commentary is included in *Martin Luther Studienausgabe*. Vol. 2, ed. H.-U. Delius (Berlin: 1982) 89–167, esp. 145.

⁷⁰ *Dr. Martin Luther's sämtliche Werke. Reformationshistorische und polemische deutsche Schriften*, ed. J.K. Irmischer (Erlangen: 1830) 142: 'We still do not see, so completely did the Roman guide of the blind capture us.' ('Noch sehen wir nit, so gar hat uns der romisch Blindenführer gefangen.')

⁷¹ Erasmus D., "Handbüchlein eines christlichen Streiters", in idem, *Ausgewählte Schriften. Lateinisch/Deutsch*, Vol. 1, ed. W. Welzig (Darmstadt: 1990) 103.

And later Erasmus implores the reader once again to follow the light: 'Leave it [...] to the blind to lead the blind and fall into the pit together.' ('Lass du [...] die Blinden die Blinden führen und zugleich in die Grube stürzen'.)⁷²

For Erasmus, the guides of the blind are usually those persons who keep us from resolutely following Christ. However, in his preface to the Bible, the "Ratio verae theologiae", he uses the image of the fall of the blind with self-critical intention when talking about his edition of the New Testament.⁷³ Sebastian Franck uses the parable along the same lines, stating in his *Paradoxa* of 1534: '[...] that is none of your concern; come and follow me. Christ says: "Leave them, they are blind guides of the blind"'. ('[...] was geht es dich an, komm du und folge mir nach. Da spricht Christus: "Lasset sie, sie sind blinde Blindenführer"').⁷⁴ Finally, John Calvin, in the preface to his 1543 hymnal, admonishes all believers that if they wish truly to appreciate the worship service as a whole and in its parts, they must rely upon God to illuminate them, lest they be left to their own devices, to their 'own understanding' ('eigenenVerstand') and the 'foolish wisdom [...] of blind leaders' ('tollen Weisheit [...] blinde[r] Führer').⁷⁵

Furthermore, the secondary literature on Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* often cites literary texts referring to the fall of the blind that might possibly have served as sources of inspiration. For the most part, however, this is limited to short quotes that simply document, in the final analysis, the parable's widespread currency in the sixteenth century. Marijnissen, in particular, lists numerous sources from 1550 to 1525, including both religious treatises and *rederijker* verse dramas,⁷⁶ but characterizes these texts as entirely conventional, adding that they provide no deeper understanding of the picture.⁷⁷ Heinke Sudhoff is the only scholar to have posited a specific text as central, maintaining that Bruegel's painting directly reacts to a play by Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert. In this context, she interprets blindness as a metaphor of the Stoic-Christian moral philosophy, but otherwise misconstrues the painting's iconography.

This list could go on indefinitely, but suffice it to say that there are probably few parables besides the parable of the fall of the blind that were quoted with such frequency in order to slander the other confessional

⁷² Ibidem 269.

⁷³ Erasmus D., "Theologische Methodenlehre", in *Ausgewählte Schriften* 121–123.

⁷⁴ Franck S., *Paradoxa*, ed. S. Wollgast (Berlin: 1966) 293.

⁷⁵ Jenny M., *Luther, Zwingli, Calvin in ihren Liedern* (Zurich: 1983) 271–281.

⁷⁶ Marijnissen. – Seidel, *Bruegel* 365–366.

⁷⁷ Ibidem 365.

position. By slandering the other party, one assigned the position of true believer to oneself. From this perspective, orthodoxy would have need of heterodoxy. Yet neither the writings of the reformers nor the other literary sources have thus far proved helpful in securing a more precise understanding of Bruegel's picture.

In order to determine the possible relevance of additional models, it is first of all necessary carefully to consider one of the painting's most important formal devices. To my mind, this device proves consequential to the way he represents the church. The church spire is truncated by the edge of the *Tüchlein*, and this prevents the cross at its pinnacle from being represented. This strange detail is why some interpreters have gone so far as to surmise that the picture might have been trimmed at its upper edge. Migroet and Marijnissen, however, have strongly rejected this hypothesis, pointing out that *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* preserves the black border typical of a *Tüchlein* painting.⁷⁸ This empirical finding surely demonstrates that the picture was never trimmed. Why then did the artist incorporate this peculiar detail, cutting off the cross at the top of the church tower? This question is crucially important.

Pieter van der Heyden's *The Parable of the Blind* of 1561, engraved after Hans Bol, provides a useful point of reference [Fig. 25]. (Cited by Heinke Sudhoff in her dissertation, it played no part in her subsequent interpretation.) The print portrays two pilgrims of St. James, along with a man carrying a child on his back. The latter could well be a Jewish hawker or beggar.⁷⁹ His fur cap, known by its Polish name *spodik* and typical of Eastern Jews, identifies him as such.⁸⁰

In this context it is important to observe the blind man with his dog, in the left middle ground, who has stopped at the large house in order to beg. Bol clearly matched the shape of this building to the church building in the background, even though the former is a brothel, as can be seen from the couple hugging in the upper window.

⁷⁸ Marijnissen. – Seidel, *Bruegel* 365.

⁷⁹ Terms for and visualizations of the 'Handels- or Trödeljuden' ('trading Jews') have a long tradition. The use of the term dates back to the Middle Ages when Jews, having been pushed out of the traditional economic system, were limited to money lending, and later also to hawking; see Schoeps J.H., *Neues Lexikon vom Judentum* (Gütersloh – München: 1992) 183.

⁸⁰ Somogyi T., *Die Schejnen und die Prosten. Untersuchungen zum Schönheitsideal der Ostjuden in Bezug auf Körper und Kleidung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Chasidismus* (Berlin: 1982) 137ff. I gratefully acknowledge Martin Przybiski, who called my attention to the *spodik* of the Eastern Jews.



Fig. 25 Pieter van der Heyden, after Hans Bol, *Parable of the Blind* (1561). Engraving, 21.8 × 29.6 cm. Location unknown.

In contrast to the comparanda cited thus far, the engraving after Bol sets positive examples against negative ones. In the background, two people have stopped to pray at a wayside cross. The dark stone cross stands out distinctly due to its placement on the vertical axis of the picture, with the nearby church pointing up the promise of redemption by divine grace. In addition, in the left foreground there appears a small shrine, familiar to us from Bruegel's *Peasant Dance* as well as Brant's *Ship of Fools*, which the blind men have bypassed [Fig. 26]. Bol is making it plain to the viewer that the blind men are oblivious the shrine's Christian message, whereas the people devoutly praying in the background are on the right path to God. The fact that these people, unlike the blind men, have found salvation is also emphasized by the nearby image of a ship.⁸¹

Also on the right path toward the cross is a heavily burdened man about to traverse a small footbridge and reach the other believers praying in front of the church. Here reference should be made to the third cross located on the church tower. The church with its cross is explicitly

⁸¹ Cf. in this context my remarks about 'Zwei Affen', in Müller, *Das Paradox als Bildform* 142–155.



Fig. 26. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Peasant Dance* (ca. 1568). Oil on panel, 114 × 164 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

placed in opposition to the blind men. In Bol's iconographic scheme, the cross consistently functions as an indication of the true faith, whereas its absence signifies transgression and deviation from the true path.

It is precisely this function of the cross as a reference to true faith, which is not to be found in Bruegel's picture. By his curious elision of this pictorial detail, the artist forces the issue of the cross's absence. More than this, he makes the viewer look this absent symbol of assured salvation. In Bruegel's composition, unlike Bol's, the cross does not appear as a sign indicating the orthodoxy of the good Christian, and nor does it set the orthodox believer in opposition to the errant blind men. On the contrary, the cross is simply another object carried by the blind: second man from the left is wearing one around his neck, but this does not keep him from losing his way or falling. Bruegel even seems subtly to be raising the question of symbolic legitimacy, for the blind man's cross, even though present, is as good as absent.

Negative Theology and Spiritualism

Given the observations made thus far, does it not follow that Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* should be read as an account of how difficult

it is to find God in this life? His picture points out the insufficiency of the cross as mere appurtenance, as an ornament hanging from the blind man's neck. 'Deus quid sit, nescitur', or 'No one knows what God is', is the programmatic title of the first *paradoxon* in the Sebastian Franck's *Paradoxa*.⁸² In formulating this paradox, Franck turns against all religions that try to comprehend God in a representational mode.⁸³ He demands a radical rejection of all images in favor of a mystical experience of God that directs us inward. The theologian from Donauwörth, at the end of this first *paradoxon*, warns and implores his readers: '[...] As long as man is dealing with images, he cannot turn to the spirit and to that which is in him. [...] You must forsake all images and turn to God in the depth of your soul; there you will find God, for the kingdom of God is within you!' ('[...] Alldieweil und solange der Mensch mit Bildern umgehet, kann er zu dem Gemüt und zu dem, was in ihm ist, nicht einkehren. [...] Ihr müsst allen Bildern den Abschied geben, zu Gott einkehren in den Grund der Seele, da sollt Ihr Gott finden, denn das Reich Gottes ist in Euch!')⁸⁴

With some justification, Hans Sedlmayr featured the opposition between *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* in his interpretation of *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*,⁸⁵ stating that the stone church can be seen to confront the false teachings of heretics, as represented by the blind men. In the statuary art of medieval cathedrals, the triumphal cross of the Church is traditionally contrasted with the broken insignia of the Synagogue, the personification of which is characterized as blind, her eyes veiled. Yet what may appear compelling and plausible in this structural opposition, is precisely what Bruegel challenges. A closer look at his composition reveals the presence of an upside-down Latin cross, formed as though by chance at the end of the single file of blind beggars. The cross that is usually carried at the head of a procession, as a powerful symbol of victory, has instead become a fleeting impression, a momentary alignment of forms soon to pass.

With reference to blind Synagogue and the allusion to heretical teaching, it is essential to adduce Sebastian Franck's *Chronica, Zeytbuch und geschychtbibel*, published in 1531 and translated into Dutch as early as 1558.⁸⁶ The "Ketzerchronik", included in this compendium, constitutes an

⁸² Franck, *Paradoxa* 17.

⁸³ On Franck's rejection of representational media, see Bietenholz, *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus* 13–31, 69–93.

⁸⁴ Franck, *Paradoxa* 21.

⁸⁵ Sedlmayr, "Pieter Bruegel" 17.

⁸⁶ Franck Sebastian, *Chronica, Zeytbuch vnd geschychtbibel* (Strasbourg, Balthasar Beck: 1531).

integral part of the *Geschychtbibel*. In his preface, the German theologian states that the reader should not assume that everyone he is about to enumerate is a heretic,⁸⁷ for such a judgment would sooner reflect not the author's opinion, but that of the Pope. On the contrary, his thesis is that the judgment of others is what creates heretics in the first place. If it were up to him, everything would be reversed, and heretics would be declared saints.

He goes on to say that there are many who ended up in the 'sooty cauldron' ('rußigen Kessel') of the Pope, whom he considers worthy of immortality. If it were left to the Bohemians, the Pope and his apostles, not Jan Hus, would appear on the list of heretics. Christians, Franck goes on to argue in his preface, have been heretics at all times and in all places, an assertion he follows by listing renowned heretics.⁸⁸

It is the nature of the world time and again to interchange good and evil, so that only truly spiritual persons are capable of discerning how true Christianity is expressed in the truth of heresy. The difference between heresy and the true Church does not reside in dogmatic content as such, but in the status of such content. According to Franck, the drama of heresy, or better, the martyrdom of heresy, started with the fact that the official churches fell short of fulfilling their Christian identity because they replaced spiritual identity with institutional authority. Heresy takes place only from the perspective of church authority that declares itself absolute, as he claims.⁸⁹

One can hardly imagine a more radical assertion than Franck's, who considered Christ the first heretic and true Christians as standing in this heretical tradition. Even so, he was under no illusion concerning the actual state of things, as is evident when he says: 'If nowadays the Pope or any other supposedly evangelical [sic] sect should sit in judgment on the heretics, exactly the same thing would happen: one sect would persecute and hate the other to death [...]. That is a certain destiny and characteristic of the Gospel and the Truth'. ('Sollten nun zu unseren Zeiten der Papst oder irgendwelche angeblich evangelische [sic] Sekten über die Ketzer urteilen, so würde es genauso zugehen, wie es eben zugeht, dass eine Sekte die andere bis in den Tod hasst [...]. Das ist ein gewisses Schicksal

⁸⁷ Ibidem 233.

⁸⁸ Franck, *Chronica, Zeytbuch vnd geschychtbibel* 234.

⁸⁹ Ibidem 235–237.

und Erkennungszeichen des Evangeliums und der Wahrheit').⁹⁰ For Franck, history from the days of the apostles to Judgment Day is forced to repeat itself: 'Wherever Christ makes himself felt, there are Judas, Caia-phas, Annas, Pilate, and as ever, the entire Passion'. ('Wo sich Christus nur regt, da findet sich Judas, Hannas, Kaiphass, Pilatus und stets die ganze Passion'.)⁹¹

To put it boldly, Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* illustrates this view of the world. He presents a positive assessment of heresy, here (as elsewhere) following Sebastian Franck's ideas.⁹² Like the author of the preface to the 'Ketzerchronik', the Flemish artist, against expectation, does not take the confrontation of orthodox Church and heresy as his starting point. Quite the opposite, in *The Fall of the Blind* there is no incompatibility between *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga*, but rather a fluid transition. The blind man on the far left may be taken positively to represent a seeker after God, whereas the attributes of the other men, whose fall appears inescapable, increasingly point to the rites of the official churches. The Church itself is ultimately exposed as guide to the blind.

Against the background of Franck's positive evaluation of heresy, Bruegel's image of the blind appears in a new light. We are urged to learn that as regards knowledge of God, all mankind is blind and resistant to change. The only way God can be experienced is within the heart, beyond all knowable images, all tangible reality. From this perspective, the staff of the blind operates as an ambivalent symbol. As long as it functions as a metaphor of the search for God and brings to mind the fact that, in principle, all knowledge is only partial, it carries a positive meaning and serves as a radical metaphor of the fundamental impossibility of knowing God fully. If you believe, however, that it can steer one onto the right path, and mistakenly take it for a reliable guide – as if it were possible to grope one's way toward God – things will turn out badly, as can easily be seen. The search for God is bound to fail whenever and wherever God is sought externally.

This ambivalent valuation of the blind as they who seek and err is indirectly confirmed if we refer to a 1571 copperplate based on a sketch by Bruegel, which shows the disciples en route to Emmaus. It is no coin-

⁹⁰ Cf. Fast (ed.), *Der linke Flügel der Reformation* 240; Wagner A., *Das Falsche der Religionen bei Sebastian Franck. Zur gesellschaftlichen Bedeutung des Spiritualismus der radikalen Reformation* (Ph.D. [digitale] dissertation, Freie Universität, Berlin: 2007) 371–447.

⁹¹ Fast (ed.), *Der linke Flügel der Reformation* 236.

⁹² This is the subject of my monograph on Bruegel, *Das Paradox als Bildform*.

cidence that one of the two Emmaus disciples reminds us of the blind beggar at the far left edge of the *Tüchlein* picture. The pedagogical intent is obvious: not only blinded people and heretics are unable to recognize Christ, but even his disciples fail to do so. They will be able to recognize him only in a spiritual and eucharistic sense, when he breaks the bread with them at the inn. In addition, the walking staffs of the two men are not crossed. For Bruegel, the Catholic pilgrims of St. James have become seekers after God, unaffiliated with any confession. In the copperplate, then, the artist has essentially stripped his subject of confessional references.

This can be said also to apply to Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*. Expressly absent from the picture is any allusion to the superiority of a specific confession: Bruegel refrains from claiming the sole legitimacy of any confession, nor does he downgrade competing denominations, deriding them as mere guides to the blind. On the contrary, he stages an allusive commentary critical of the Churches. Viewed in light of ironic-spiritualist theology, his narrative of the fall of the blind is less about personal transgression than about the fall of Christian religion. Whenever it mistakes itself for an unimpeachable institution with sole claim to the legitimate representation of the divine will, it becomes a guide to the blind. Looking at the blind beggars in this, we are invited to take a critical stance toward the second one from the left, who wears a rosary around his neck. The rosary hanging from the belt of the third man from the right is another hint at the veneration of the Virgin Mary. The aspiration to draw close to God has been reduced to mere tokens of an externalized and presumptuous faith. For Franck, the Fall of Man continues when people build churches, believing that they can externalize their faith and substituting empty signs for the fullness of divine truth.⁹³ The church that is built out of bricks and mortar, stucco and stone, is the real guide of the blind!

In his *Paradoxa*, Franck speaks forcefully against the fallen state of a Christianity that disregards its spiritual nature.⁹⁴ He describes its decline as an inevitable process, as if the true, invisible church needed to be dispersed and persecuted from the moment of its inception in the days of the apostles. The 234th *paradoxon* is entitled: "The Church, a lily among thorns, is scattered among pagans and trampled on until the end". ("Die

⁹³ This is the title of the 89th *paradoxon*: "Temples, images, celebrations, sacrifices, and ceremonies do not belong in the New Testament". ("Tempel, Bilder, Feste, Opfer und Zeremonien gehören nicht ins Neue Testament".) For this *paradoxon*, see Franck, *Paradoxa* 142.

⁹⁴ Ibidem 347–352.

Kirche, eine Lilie unter Dornen, wird unter den Heiden zerstreut und bis zum Ende zertreten").⁹⁵ Bruegel seizes on this metaphor. On the right, above the canal and the falling blind man, there is a blooming water lily. The canal itself is hard to see. Almost without transition, its swampy surface merges into the adjoining bushes and brownish meadow, an optical 'trap' also used by Bruegel in *The Peasant and the Birdnester* and based on the same plant imagery. In that picture as well, the lily is a symbol of the true Church.

In conclusion, I want to call attention to one additional pictorial detail that has escaped scholarly notice. Bruegel would not be Bruegel if he did not also positively convey a message about humility. His viewers might otherwise have gone on, getting along comfortably in a world full of religious fallacies and believing that they might be spared such a fall. But the picture, rather than allowing this *status quo ante*, makes an admonitory point aimed discreetly at the viewer. As described earlier, the church spire is cut off at the upper edge of the picture. However, it is precisely this missing section that is visible on the horizon to the left of center beyond the hill. The trees in the immediate vicinity demonstrate the scale of this part of the building. In other words, the artist has the missing section of the church tower reappear somewhere else.

The church spire beyond the hill becomes an axis for the events in the foreground. It separates the group of people who are already falling from those who might perhaps still fall. It marks the point where there is still hope that those at the end of the row might let go of one another and thus avoid falling into the morass. Is it stretching a point to say that this might be intended as a warning to the viewer? He is in the same position as the third man from the left who may or may not fall; with respect to him, as also to us, we cannot be sure of the outcome. Be that as it may, if the self-confident viewer presumes to disassociate himself from those who are falling, this will errantly put himself in danger of falling eventually. Therefore, he too is under the influence of the church beyond the hill, which though invisible to him, is nevertheless powerful. The question is not whether or not others will fall, but whether or not we will fall. And so, the viewer would be wrong to place himself above the unfortunate blind men in the foreground, because he, like them, runs the risk of following heedlessly in the footsteps of a blind guide.

⁹⁵ Ibidem 347.

Let us return once more to Franck's letters translated into Dutch at the beginning of the 1560s. As regards theology, they repeat ideas that could have been familiar to an adherent of the German theologian from his other writings. But what makes these letters especially interesting is how clearly they advocate a Nicodemite strategy.⁹⁶ The fact that the letters were translated at this point in time emphasizes how urgent this problem was thought to be.

Advocating Nicodemism, however, was not without risk, as is evident from a passage in which Franck expressly asks his addressee Campanus to handle the letter carefully so as not to turn himself into a martyr.⁹⁷ He explicitly warns the recipient not to let his letter fall among 'dogs and swine' ('Hunde und Säue'), lest he prepare a 'premature cross' ('vorzeitiges Kreuz') for himself, for many are led to the gallows by their imprudent and ill-timed idle talk.⁹⁸ This practice of secrecy even receives theological justification when he briefly states that God himself hides his wisdom 'under the cloak of parables and in mysterious letters' ('unter der Decke der Gleichnisse und Parabeln der Buchstaben') that cannot be understood 'by anyone other than those who have been taught by God himself' ('von niemand als von denen, die von Gott selbst gelehrt').⁹⁹ He advises caution, counseling that one should only speak when and where it is appropriate to do so.

In view of all that has been said, it must seem obvious that Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* in a richly encrypted image. The wealth of allusions is such that one can surely claim that it resists easy interpretation. Yet the iconographic program, as I have tried to show, is not at all propagandistic: quite the contrary, it partakes of qualities readily associated with subtle theological discourse. The heterodox content in the picture is dissembled; an heretical interpretation is a possibility lurking just beneath its surface.

Taking up once more the question of Bruegel's pictorial hermeneutics in *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind*, it is important to stress that the artist treats artistic tradition in a very unconventional way. He cues the viewer not so much to facilitate understanding of his picture, but rather

⁹⁶ Fast (ed.), *Der linke Flügel der Reformation* 232–233.

⁹⁷ Ibidem 233.

⁹⁸ In a certain sense, this also applies to Campanus, since he spent a large part of his life incarcerated; see "Johannes Campanus", in Hofmann K. – Buchberger M. (eds.), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. 2 (Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: 1994) 914.

⁹⁹ Fast (ed.), *Der linke Flügel der Reformation* 233.

to generate misunderstanding. Expressed in modern terms, this could be called a transcriptive procedure. He is using tradition in a purposely critical way.¹⁰⁰ Utilizing existing iconographic traditions, the artist suggests certainties that prove, upon reflection, to be elusive. He is using prior models in an unconventional way. Bruegel does not draw on themes, types, or motifs in order to continue a tradition of meaning, but in order to question it. Yet he does this in a very subtle way, which is discernible only at a secondary level of meaning. This *Umschreibeverfahren*, or transcription procedure, as I would like to call it, needs to be ascertained, because the relationship between pictures is generally affirmative in nature. The Flemish artist takes a different approach. He points to models in order to contradict, or at least question, their supposed truth content. He embraces traditions in order to prove them wrong from within. In doing so, the artist does not just contradict certain statements; rather, he goes beyond them by questioning the validity of the very value system they represent.

Bruegel's strategy is to lay out everything in the picture without expressing himself unequivocally. At no time does the narrative mode of his picture relinquish latency. It is only when the beholder manages to connect the significant elements that an added hermeneutical value is created. Seen individually, all these details – the truncated church tower, the cross worn by the blind man, the rosary of another, the cowherd, the cow falling into the ditch, the spire beyond the hill, the open space in front of the church, the blind man reminiscent of an Emmaus disciple, and the dead tree in front of the cowherd – would seem to be accidental. But taken aggregatively or, better, as a whole, these elements are like steps leading to a higher level of meaning: the new meaning to be created can only be attained proactively. If I link the existing elements correctly, meanings may develop that point beyond what is actually shown. Yet the creator of the picture always retained for himself of rejecting all this as a misrepresentation. To put this in linguistic terms, I misunderstand the picture if I confuse *parole* with *langue*, if I believe that an argument legitimizing orthodoxy is, of necessity, configured into the fall of the blind; this assumption must be interrogated, in spite of the fact that it appears to be confirmed, at least initially, by the parabolic and proverbial imagery of blind men falling into a ditch.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Müller, "Ein anderer Laokoon" 389–455.

¹⁰¹ Saussure F. de, *Cours de linguistique générale*, ed. R. Engler, 2 volumes. (Wiesbaden: 1967–1974) I 36–39.

As we have seen, blindness and the fall of the blind have been defining and exclusionary metaphors of orthodox Christianity at all times. In contrast with all other interpretations, my conclusion in reading *The Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* is that the artist is questioning the assumption that the true Church and heresy are mutually exclusive. Thus I am inferring an illuminative-ironic intention in Bruegel's painting. In it, the exclusionary principle of denunciation is itself being criticized. The picture describes, in the form of an allegory, how the Christian religion begins as an innocent search for God; how it comes to be externalized in symbols, rites, and official churches; and how it ultimately loses its way and falls.

In conclusion, it behooves me to state that the goal of this article is not to impart specialized iconographical knowledge. Instead, my intention has been to discuss the potentiality of Bruegel's visual strategies that have as their goal the communication of religious ideas standing outside the Catholic Church. My reflections on orthodoxy and heresy are not meant to perpetuate the cliché of artists as society's outsiders. Quite the contrary, I start from the assumption that up to the time of the Council of Trent, religious 'deviance' (in the sense of non-conformity) was more common than we have been led to believe by an art historiography oriented toward strict opposition between the confessions.¹⁰² Finally, let me remind you that we must not value the esthetic experience of Bruegel's painting any less than the historical 'information' it conveys. What comes to mind here is something that Jacob Burckhardt once expressed so well – that a successful work of art is like an arrow that flies through the centuries. Concurring with the well-known Swiss historian, I have tried to show how Bruegel's *Fall of the Blind Leading the Blind* gives us privileged access to the transgressiveness implicit in much early modern art. Whoever looks into the empty eyes of the falling blind man will not easily forget what he has seen. After all, in these dead eyes we recognize not only the horror of an impending fall but also the sudden realization of our own culpability.

¹⁰² Cf. Schwerhoff, "Gottlosigkeit und Eigensinn" 58–63.

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BRUEGEL'S BIBLICAL KINGS

Larry Silver

Old Testament Kings

Discussing Pieter Bruegel's *Tower of Babel* in 2008, Margaret Carroll discerned contemporary allusions to oppressive Spanish imperial regency, especially to some extraordinary recent expenditures on civic fortifications by the artist's hometown of Antwerp.¹ Her approach remained largely political and topical, even for a religious painting, and although more subtle, her interpretation still echoed earlier, more vulgar claims for political currency in later Bruegel paintings, such as when Stanley Ferber discerned local political tribulations of the nascent Dutch Revolt within the artist's *Massacre of the Innocents*, represented in a wintry Flemish village (see below).² This essay will make a broader claim for a consistent spiritual outlook by the artist, one which can be considered collectively as a kind of pictorial exegesis. In short, Bruegel clearly contrasts Old Testament kingship with the advent of a new age of peace under Christ in the Gospels. While this outlook does not deny the artist a clear and current response to increasing threats of local warfare in the Spanish Netherlands,³ it does take seriously the religious content of his pictures as well as an intertextual – or, better, intervisual – relationship among them. Indeed, Bruegel's expressly pacifist outlook harmonized fully with his spiritual conviction: that during the tumultuous Roman imperial rule

¹ Carroll M., "The Conceits of Empire: Bruegel's *Ice-Skating Outside St. George's Gate in Antwerp* and *Tower of Babel*", in *Painting and Politics in Northern Europe* (University Park, PA: 2008) 64–87. The basic catalogue of the painting (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) is by Demus K. – Klauner F. – Schützl K. (eds.), *Flämische Malerei von Eyck bis Bruegel* (Vienna: 1981) 76–81.

² Ferber S., "Pieter Bruegel and the Duke of Alba", *Renaissance News* 9 (1966) 205–219. A copy of the painting is in Vienna; Demus K. – Kleiner F. – Schützl K. (eds.), *Flämische Malerei von Jan van Eyck bis Pieter Bruegel d.Ä.: Katalog der Gemäldegalerie* (Vienna: 1981) 118–22. The original is in the English royal collection, housed at Hampton Court; Campbell L., *The Early Flemish Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge: 1985) 13–19, no. 9.

³ For a recent history, Arnade P.J., *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: 2008).

of the Holy Land under Herod and Pontius Pilate, the advent of Christ as Prince of Peace (*Isaiah* 9:6) fundamentally altered, even reversed, the prevailing culture of warfare. Jesus ushered in the new era of grace, to fulfill the promise of prophecy: to turn 'swords into plowshares' (*Isaiah* 2:4).

Bruegel's fullest representation of armies shows a battlefield conflict in another, smaller panel, *The Suicide of Saul* (1562; Vienna) [Fig. 1]. This Old Testament event depicts an episode from 1 *Samuel* (31:1–6; inscribed on the panel itself 'Saul xxxi. Capit'), when the army of the Israelites, led by King Saul into battle against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, stands on the verge of being conquered. According to the Bible, the sons of Saul were slain by the foe, whose archers even threatened King Saul himself. The king then falls upon his own sword to avoid being humiliated in defeat. Bruegel's image places the suicide alone with his armor-bearer in the lower left corner of the composition, while below them across the remainder of the panel teems the crowded conflict of miniature armies in the Jezreel Valley. In the distance, crossing the river, the Israelites retreat along with their animals, including visible camels.

For his visual model of the battle, Bruegel almost certainly relied upon south German images of important battles, such as the Battle of Pavia (1525; woodcut prints by Hans Schäufelein and Jörg Breu the Elder).⁴ Within the high viewpoint and expansive landscape, he presents dense, ant-like clusters of soldiers: armored cavalry breaking lances from horseback and turbaned bowmen, again redolent of the contemporary nemesis of Islam as well as Near Eastern authenticity for the biblical narrative. This primal conflict, appropriate to sixteenth-century struggles between the Christian Holy Roman Empire and the Muslim Ottoman Empire, already had found its way into German paintings, such as the historic *Battle of Issus* between Alexander the Great and Persian Emperor Darius (333 BCE), as depicted by Albrecht Altdorfer (1529; Munich).⁵ That work, located in the Munich Wittelsbach palace of Duke Albrecht IV, would have been accessible to Bruegel only en route to Italy; however, except for the use of Turkish uniforms, prints alone could have sufficed to convey the Germanic model of battle scenes for the *Suicide of Saul*.

Conventional wisdom about the choice to depict this highly unusual subject relies upon medieval commentaries about Saul as the epitome

⁴ Hale J.R., *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (New Haven: 1990) esp. 169–199.

⁵ Ibidem 192–199, fig. 244; Silver L., "Germanic Patriotism in the Age of Dürer", in Eichberger D. – Zika C. (eds.), *Dürer and his Culture* (Cambridge: 1998) 59, with further references.



Fig. 1. Pieter Bruegel, *Suicide of Saul* (1562). Oil on panel. 33.5 × 55 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (New York, Art Resource).

of pride. For example, as Fritz Grossmann points out, Saul appears in Dante's *Purgatorio* (XII, 40–42) beside Lucifer and Nimrod as the emblems of pride: 'O Saul, how upon your own sword did you appear there dead on Gilboa, which never thereafter felt rain or dew'.⁶ Yet a more thorough inspection of the Old Testament text reveals that this scene of punishment stemmed not so much from the pride of Saul, who was selected by God's prophet Samuel, but rather from the initial mistake by the people, perhaps even to be regarded as their sin, of anointing any king in the first place. *First Samuel* 8 recounts how the people came to the prophet to demand a king 'like all the nations' (verses 5–6), but that 'the thing was evil in Samuel's eyes'. In short, Samuel opposes monarchy and inclines instead toward the divinely inspired leadership of earlier biblical tradition. In his next speech (verses 10–18) the prophet warns that the new king will appropriate sons and goods for battle, and that the people will later cry out in regret, but be ignored by the Lord. In effect, as God says (verse 7) the people have rejected a divine king for an earthly ruler. Saul is chosen in part because of his huge size, but as the Goliath story later

⁶ Grossmann F., *Pieter Bruegel: Complete Edition of the Paintings*, rev. ed. (London: 1966) 193–194. The note at the end of Dante's verse makes reference to David's lament upon hearing the news of Saul's suicide (2 *Samuel* 1:17–21), where the new young king (1:21) curses the mountains of Gilboa. See also Auerbach E., "Saul's Pride", *MLN* 64 (1949) 267–269.

reveals, size or physical strength is not the marker of either true kingship or divine election. Indeed, the desperate king Saul will turn eventually to witchcraft after the death of Samuel (1 *Samuel* 28), to receive ghostly prophecy on the eve of this very battle at Mount Gilboa – a sure sign that he has been abandoned by the Lord; indeed, there the sentence of his own death and that of his sons and heirs are foretold.

Even the anointment of a king can be cancelled by divine decree, as Samuel makes clear in a passage just before the battle against Goliath (1 *Samuel* 15; the battle itself Goliath is chapter 17), when David rejects the very armor of Saul, ‘the Lord saveth not with sword and spear’ (1 *Samuel* 17:47). Indeed, the text returns to the same theme of sight, noting the true spiritual insight of the divine: ‘it is not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart’ (1 *Samuel* 16:7).

So what is being punished here is not the pride of Saul, but that of the people Israel, who demanded a king. Thus in the *Suicide of Saul* Bruegel offers less a theological condemnation of pride than a veiled political commentary against monarchy itself. As David’s lament canonically declares, ‘How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!’ (2 *Samuel* 1:25). For the most part, historians usually locate the issue of Netherlandish hostility towards monarchy at a later point, towards the latter years of Bruegel’s lifetime around 1566 and afterwards, with conflicts directed against the Spanish regents of King Philip II, especially the Duke of Alba.⁷ Yet here we remember that Margaret Carroll discerned how much resentment arose in Antwerp already by 1562 against high taxes for foreign wars and royal manipulation of new bishoprics by Spanish rulers. In that same year the city magistrates presented a remonstrance to Regent Margaret of Parma.⁸ Thus the contemporary monarchy is to be feared, because it entangles a people in state military ventures.⁹

⁷ Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*.

⁸ Carroll, *Painting and Politics* 31–32, 84–85; Mansbach S., “Pieter Bruegel’s Towers of Babel”, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 45 (1982) 43–56; Nierop H. van, “The Nobles and the Revolt”, in Darby G. (ed.), *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt* (London: 2001) 48–66. Also Marnef G., *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation*, trans. J.C. Grayson (Baltimore: 1996).

⁹ This issue would continue as a source of conflict, even within an independent Netherlands in the later seventeenth century, between the war party of the ruling stadholder and the free market interests of local city leaders. In some respects the same tension already was already anticipated in the fifteenth century, when urban resistance opposed the centralizing tendencies of government and warfare under the Dukes of Burgundy.



Fig. 2. Pieter Bruegel, *Tower of Babel* (1563). Oil on panel. 114 × 155 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (New York, Art Resource).

Bruegel's other major Old Testament painting, his 1563 *Tower of Babel* (Vienna) [Fig. 2], again presents the Old Testament gathering of might and power under the despotic leadership of a king. That work isolates another ruler figure in the lower left corner of the composition: Nimrod.¹⁰ We met Nimrod as another of Dante's figures exemplifying pride in *Purgatorio* (XII, 34–36): 'I saw Nimrod at the foot of his great labor, as if bewildered; and there looking on were the people who were proud with him in Shinar'. Nimrod is not mentioned as the instigator of the Tower of Babel in the Bible text (*Genesis* 11:1–9), but he does appear in the previous verse (*Genesis* 10:9–10) as the son of Cush, the first on earth to be a mighty man, and his kingdom was Babel [...] in the land of Shinar. Nimrod figures even more prominently in the book by the Roman historian Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (I: 4), where the plan to build the tower (called the Tower of Babylon) is ascribed to Nimrod, another giant who was the first king of the Babylonians (as if in echo of Saul) and who 'transformed the

¹⁰ Most recently Carroll, "Conceits of Empire" 75–87, with bibliography.

state of affairs into tyranny'.¹¹ The Nimrod of Josephus seeks to avenge the loss of his ancestors in the Flood and strives to produce a structure that could never be submerged by rising waters. The same tyrant is castigated by St. Augustine in his *City of God* (5th c. CE) as the 'proud and impious founder' of Babel, which he also identifies as Babylon (XVI, 4).¹² Babel thus contrasts as polar opposite to the eternal city of God, equated with the Christian Church, so its divine destruction marks the early assertion of the true faith. In this respect, then, Dante's condemnation of Nimrod's pride, like that of the original pride-filled sinner, Lucifer, builds upon its own solid patristic foundations.

The Babylon equation holds resonance of its own. Old Testament prophets, *Isaiah* (13, 14, 21, 46–47) and *Jeremiah* (50–51), foretold destruction for Babylon and her king. Referenced in the New Testament book of Revelation, sinful Babylon marks 'a dwelling place of demons' (18:2) and a place of incalculable riches (like the gifts of the magi), which will fall in final divine judgment. The merchants of Babylon will mourn her loss, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth!' (18:19)

This very process as a divine act is illustrated by Bruegel's near-contemporary, Cornelis Anthonisz., in his 1547 etching [Fig. 3].¹³ The artist's signature monogram appears in the sky on an ominous bat, opposite which a Dutch inscription proclaims, 'When it was highest / must it not then fall?' Indeed, Anthonisz. shows heavenly agents of that destruction in the form of angels who accompany the thunderclap that undermines the structure, which falls in fragments. Below, a crowd reacts with gestures of distress, and turbaned soldiers (like those of Bruegel's *Suicide of Saul*) escape across a crumbling bridge. Clad in antique armor, one figure who might be Nimrod has fallen to the earth in the center foreground.

While the collapse of the Tower is the subject of this etching, earlier Netherlandish manuscript images depict its construction. One illumination features cranes and construction technology as well as the prominent, foreground, commanding figure of Nimrod with a kneeling figure. It appears in the luxury breviary manuscript, exported to Cardinal Domenico

¹¹ I:4, 2–3, in *Josephus with an English Translation*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, in *Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: 1958–65), cited by Carroll, *Painting and Politics in Northern Europe* 211, n. 59.

¹² Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. M. Dods (Chicago: 1952) 425–426.

¹³ Armstrong C., *The Moralizing Prints of Cornelis Anthonisz* (Princeton: 1990) 105–114; Kloek W.T. – Halsema-Kubes W. – Baarsen R.J. (eds.), *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm: Noordnederlandse kunst* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum] (Amsterdam: 1986) 281, no. 157.



Fig. 3. Cornelis Anthonisz., *Tower of Babel* (1547). Etching, 32.3 × 38.3 cm. London, British Museum.

Grimani in Venice (ascribed to either Gerard Horenbout or the Master of James IV of Scotland, ca. 1515–20; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, fo. 206).¹⁴ There it forms an Old Testament counterpoint and typological prefiguration of Pentecost, early Christians speaking in tongues. One other early painting of the Tower of Babel (Venice, Ca D'Oro), sometimes attributed to the sixteenth-century Dutch painter, Jan van Scorel, shows Nimrod as a naked giant in the foreground, directing construction before a chaotic welter of workers.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kren T. – McKendrick S., *Illuminating the Renaissance* [exh. cat., J. Paul Getty Museum] (Los Angeles: 2003) 420–422, no. 126, with bibliography.

¹⁵ Minkowski H., *Aus dem Nebel der Vergangenheit steigt der Turm zu Babel* (Berlin: 1960), esp. 48, 68; Grieten S., “De iconografie van de Toren van Babel bij Pieter Bruegel: traditie, vernieuwing en navolging”, in *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum Antwerpen* (1988) 97–136, esp. 106, fig. 4.

A Tower-like construction also appears behind the figure of Pride (*Hooverdicheyt*) in Maarten van Heemskerck's engraving, part of the cycle of the *Vicissitudes of Human Affairs* (1564) [Fig. 4].¹⁶ Once more the size, strength and power of a despotic Old Testament king leads him and his servants into proud construction of a doomed building and the inevitable dissolution of society itself – the very antithesis of the humility of Jesus and the true community of the faithful.

Significantly, in Vienna Bruegel represents the Tower being constructed on the orders of Nimrod.¹⁷ Though built up, utilizing bricks unloaded on



Fig. 4. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Triumph of Pride* from cycle of *Vicissitudes of Human Affairs* (1564). Engraving by Cornelis Cort. 22.4 × 22.9 cm. London, British Museum.

¹⁶ Veldman I., *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century* (Maarsen: 1977) 133–141, esp. fig. 87; Veldman I., *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck* [exh. cat., Frans Hals Museum] (Haarlem: 1986) 50–51, no. 6.3. Following Pride comes Envy.

¹⁷ Klein H.A., "Pieter Bruegel the Elder as a Guide to Sixteenth-Century Technology", *Scientific American* 238/3 (March 1978) 134–137.

shore from large ocean-going vessels, it also seems to be carved down, grandly shaped out of the side of a mountain. We shall see later that Bruegel follows tradition in seeing natural mountains as the wilderness sites of holiness and prophetic vision, but this crag is being carved away to serve as the core of a rival, impious construction by humans. Yet the negative prospects for the future of the Tower are also evident in Bruegel's presentation, since this enormous, ponderous structure stands like a castle built on sand: already it is tilting, sinking due to soggy marshland (typical of the Low Countries), at the lower left, just behind the imperious Nimrod.

Bruegel's own architectural plan with arches and buttresses clearly derives from the classic ancient Roman megalith, the Colosseum, like the 1547 Antonisz. etching. This allusion to the Colosseum also implies its own eventual ruin, even as it is being built. Not only had Bruegel seen the great Flavian monument on his own visit to Rome, but he also could have relied upon 1550 etchings by his publisher, Hieronymus Cock.¹⁸ Bruegel's Colosseum reference shows how, even in the midst of its construction, the Tower of Babel contains the seeds of its own ruination and its role in the eventual cause of the loss of human unity and harmony. Moreover, the identification of Babylon with Rome was implicit in the book of *Revelation* (17:9) and explicitly connected by Augustine, who called Rome a 'daughter of the former Babylon' (*City of God*, 18:22).

Bruegel also shows a busy port city at the edge of the great tower, gathering ships and their imported riches like his own home town of Antwerp; even the technological marvel of the foot-powered crane of the port is pictured on the flank of the Tower, used as a winch to raise building materials from sea-level to the heights of construction. This painting emphasizes the town and port in the lower right corner – opposite the figure of

¹⁸ Riggs T., *Hieronymus Cock: Printmaker and Publisher* (New York: 1977) ("Views of Roman Ruins") 30, 129–130, 256–259, nos. 2–11; Burgers J. (ed.), *In de Vier Winden: de prentuitgeverij van Hieronymus Cock 1507/10–1570 te Antwerpen : uit de collectie tekeningen en prenten* [exh. cat., Museum Boymans-Van Beunigen] (Rotterdam: 1988) 32–33, nos. 15–16. In addition, Maarten van Heemskerck's visit to Rome (1532–1536) generated numerous drawings of the ruins in the city, including the Colosseum, which he utilized in later prints and paintings, such as his 1553 *Self-Portrait* (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum). Showing a younger artist sketching on site, this image links the artist to Rome and asserts his own authentic experience of the historic antiquities; however, when placed alongside his mature likeness, the ruin also underscores his backward-looking sense of the passage of time. For Van Heemskerck drawings, recorded in Rome 1532–36, now see Furia A. di, *Heemskerck's Rome: Memory, Antiquity, and the Berlin Sketchbooks* (Ph.D. Neward, DE, University of Delaware: 2008), esp. Chapter 3. See also Kloek-Halsema-Kubes – Baarsen (eds.), *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm* 267–268, no. 148; Bruyn J., "Oude en nieuwe elementen in de 16de-eeuwse voorstellingswereld", *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 35 (1987), esp. 143–151.

Nimrod – thus evoking connotations of the same passage in *Revelation* (18:19), adduced above, where merchants and shipmasters bewail the fall of Babylon and the vengeance of God against her sin and wealth. If Bruegel has an agenda to criticize monarchical despotism in the figure of Nimrod, he also surely conveys anxiety about trade and urban wealth through his link between shipping and the construction of the Tower of Babel.¹⁹

In contrast, the Netherlands tradition of landscape paintings, by Joachim Patinir and later Antwerp artists, including Bruegel's own *Conversion of St. Paul* (see below) drew close associations between mountain heights and elevated spirituality. This association points further to the heretical nature of the Tower of Babel, which strives in vain to imitate the realm of the divine, to reach above the very clouds entirely through man-made effort.

New Testament Contrasts

Mountain crags at the level of the clouds define Bruegel's 1567 *Conversion of Paul* (Vienna) [Fig. 5]. Our first impression consists of a high mountain pass with a distant view down to a verdant seacoast and small figures making their way through it, from sunlight at the left horizon to dark storm clouds in the upper right. Here military force fully fills the composition, particularly the men on horseback in the foreground. Anchoring a viewpoint into the distances at both left and right, several large equestrian figures occupy the lower right corner of the picture, including the prominent rump ends of horses. These mounted figures are cavalry officers, dressed in bright, ostentatious costumes and bearing the banner of their forces. Behind them a fuller cavalry squadron appears in contemporary armor before the dark clouds. Traditionally such cavalry positions were the prerogative of nobles, who had the means for both horses and full field armor (foot soldiers often had partial armor, either helmets or breastplates), and they served as field leaders in medieval warfare.²⁰ But this is also an army of foot soldiers as well as cavalry. Closer inspection of the left corner of the image shows infantry making its way up the steep hillside. This combination of military units was still characteristic of sixteenth-century

¹⁹ Silver L., "Pieter Bruegel in the Capital of Capitalism", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 47 (1996) 125–153, esp. 135–136.

²⁰ Vale M., *War and Chivalry* (London: 1981); Keen M. (ed.), *Medieval Warfare A History* (Oxford: 1999), esp. Ayton A., "Arms, Armour, and Horses" 186–208.



Fig. 5. Pieter Bruegel, *Conversion of St. Paul* (1567). Oil on panel. 108 × 156 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (New York, Art Resource).

armies, although artillery in the form of cannons (not shown) increasingly played a role.²¹

Such an army would have resembled the Spanish forces brought to the Netherlands by the Duke of Alba in 1567, the very year of this painting.²² Ten thousand strong, they left Spain in April of 1567, and Alba led his army northwards in June on what became known as ‘the Spanish road’, across the Alps of Italy through Piedmont and Savoy before arriving in Brussels on August 22. The purpose of this indirect route was to avoid the regional influence of Calvin’s Geneva while en route to the Netherlands. No viewer of Bruegel’s painting could have failed to associate with Alba both the alpine imagery and the presentation of soldiers in contemporary armor and uniforms.

²¹ Silver L., “Shining Armor: Emperor Maximilian, Chivalry, and War”, in Cuneo P. (ed.), *Artful Armies, Beautiful Battles* (Leiden: 2001) 61–86.

²² Parker G., *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567–1659*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: 1990); idem, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven: 1998) 115–146.

Yet the true subject remains obscure upon first glance.²³ This picture remains a religious subject, although the main figure has to be discovered at the foot of the towering evergreen trees near the center of the composition. Clad in blue and surrounded by a circle of observers, foreshortened on the ground as he lies before the horse from which he has just fallen, lies the figure of St. Paul (*Acts* 9:1–8). In his role as Saul, persecutor of Christians, the future Paul was on a journey to Damascus to round up the religious and convey them to Jerusalem for punishment at the hands of the high priest. According to the Gospels, a light shone on him, and he heard the voice of Jesus as he fell to the ground. In Bruegel's painting that light can be found, above and to the left of the evergreens, angled to intercept the prone figure of Saul. His soldiers respond to his accident, but do not seem to grasp the significance of the event. In the ensuing denouement the temporarily blinded Saul, who will change his name to Paul, would be led on to Damascus by his own men.

Like the Old Testament Tower of Babel theme, the New Testament conversion of Paul shows a literal fall from the back of a horse, the very marker of chivalric honor, which also constituted an image of the punishment of pride.²⁴ Certainly sudden divine rebuke produced a conversion in the name of faith – a transformation from pride to its opposite, humility, which became a commonplace in sermon literature on this event. And while the long visual tradition of this New Testament image did not mean that it had to have particular contemporary significance, the conjunction of its timing with the momentous year of 1567 coincided with the arrival of Alba after his own trip through the Alps. Surely the idea of punishing pride and suggesting the importance of personal recognition, even revelation, for a potential persecutor would have been relevant for the local representative of perceived tyranny, Alba. But his use of a hallowed biblical scene could have provided the artist with plausible denial if he were to be challenged or charged – like so many who were soon subjected to charges by the Council of Troubles after 1567 – with criticism of Alba and

²³ Richardson T., "Landscaping the Soul: Pieter Bruegel's *Conversion of St. Paul*", in Ribouillault D. – Weemans M. (eds.), *Sacred Landscape. Landscape as Exegesis in Early Modern Europe* (Florence: 2011) 51–65.

²⁴ Dobschütz E., "Die Bekehrung des Paulus", *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 50 (1929) 87–111; citing this article, Parshall P., "Lucas van Leyden's Narrative Style", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 29 (1978) 223, notes that the earliest equestrian examples of Saul's conversion derived from scenes depicting the battle between Virtues and Vices from Prudentius's Latin allegory, *Psychomachia*. For Prudentius and Pride's association with a horse, Mâle E., *The Gothic Image* (New York: 1958) 98–130, esp. 99.

his authority. It should be noted that a number of scholars take issue with this degree of specific reference, but had Bruegel been more explicit, then his life would have been worthless, whereas if he were not conscious of the reference, he might not have been so emphatic about relocating the entire event to the mountains.

Certainly Bruegel's distinctive contribution to the theme of St. Paul's moment of conversion is his decision to stage it in a convincing alpine setting. Of course, the artist had already obtained his own direct experience of the Alps on his journey and return to Italy in the early 1550s. Concerning the meaning of this choice, we also recall that mountains are the express sites for divine revelation, often in the form of looming clouds, as in the biblical places, Mt. Sinai or Mt. Tabor for the Transfiguration (*Matthew* 17:1–8; *Mark* 9:2–8; *Luke* 9:28–36). Indeed, Lucas van Leyden had previously featured another scene of discovery, his small triptych of the *Dance around the Golden Calf* (ca. 1530; Amsterdam), where the viewer must peer past debauchery by the Israelites in the foreground, beyond their idolatrous rites with the Golden Calf in the middle ground, in order to find the 'still small voice' (1 *Kings* 19:11–12) of the divine in a hovering cloud atop Mount Sinai, speaking to the lone figure of Moses in the upper background.²⁵ Here, too, the image of pride and sensuality in the lowlands contrasts with the true spirituality and personal humility before the Lord of a kneeling Moses on the heights. Already the landscapes by Patinir show highlands to suggest the commonplace notion of hardship and spiritual trial in the 'wilderness', just as in both literary and visual allegory there is also a traditional association of steepness with the path of virtue, as opposed to the easier flat path of pleasure.²⁶ Indeed, the *Conversion of St. Paul* can be understood as the inversion of the *Tower*

²⁵ Filedt Kok J.P., *The Dance around the Golden Calf by Lucas van Leyden* (Amsterdam: 2008); Silver L., "The Sin of Moses': Comments on the Early Reformation in a Late Painting by Lucas van Leyden", *Art Bulletin* 55 (1973) 401–409, esp. 407–409; Smith E.L., *The Paintings of Lucas van Leyden* (Columbia, Mo.: 1992) 64–66, 72–74, 106–109, no. 11; Lawton Smith also notes that here Lucas includes gypsy costumes for these early Hebrews, and she ascribes meaning to their literal Egyptian reference, but also to the associated loose living of this ethnic group. Reference to 1 *Kings* indicates another revelation of the Lord to Elijah on Mount Horeb (another name for Sinai) with the mystic length of forty days, like Jesus's own Temptation in the wilderness (*Matthew* 4:1–11; *Mark* 1:12–13; *Luke* 4:1–13).

²⁶ Falkenburg R., *Joachim Patinir: Landscape as an Image of the Pilgrimage of Life* (Amsterdam – Philadelphia: 1988) 78–82, 91–96, 101–102. This allegorical imagery already appears in Albrecht Dürer's engraving of *Hercules* (B.73), where the hero assists Virtue in her battle of lust before a *paysage moralisé*; an image of the 'castle of virtue' atop a hill in the left background, in contrast to the river valley of pleasure at the right horizon.

of *Babel*, in which the view from towering heights of a mountain range provides the setting for contact with the divine and spiritual revelation, as well as subjugation of pride, whereas the view of Nimrod on the level of the worldly plains and busy seaport offers contrasting vainglory as it substitutes the man-made construction of artificial heights to rival the clouds of heaven.

Jesus as King of Kings

Within this dichotomy, Bruegel carries out his contrasting New Testament vision of Christ throughout his religious paintings during the 1560s. His imagery emphasizes how often during the life of Jesus outside threats from political power in the form of military coercion forced the holy figures into suffering, flight, and even eventual martyrdom. Bruegel's paintings during the narrow time span of 1562–1567 provide their own exegetical patterns, albeit often using negative exemplars of those Roman rulers, whose violence and cruelty, effected through their soldiers, offer antithesis and contrast rather than peaceful harmony.

Bruegel's undated *Massacre of the Innocents* (Hampton Court, Royal Collection; copy, Vienna) [Fig. 6] has been associated by scholars with the dated 1566 *Census at Bethlehem* as well as with the unfolding political disturbances in Antwerp during 1567.²⁷ This post-Christmas biblical scene is set in a contemporary Flemish village under slate-blue winter skies that silhouette the bare branches of trees. Against the white ground cover of snow glow the bright red uniforms of the imperial soldiers, also seen in *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1564; see below).

Despite the seasonal quiescence of its setting, this scene depicts a violent Gospel event (*Matthew* 2:16), when henchmen of King Herod seek to extirpate all new-born children in order to eliminate the infant Jesus as a rival to the regional ruler. While not previously a subject on its own in Flemish painting, it appears frequently within a background village in the distance of sixteenth-century Antwerp images of the Flight into Egypt (*Matthew* 2:13–21), such as paintings by Joachim Patinir and Quinten Massys. Whether or not Bruegel explicitly signaled any form of political

²⁷ The most recent assertion of Habsburg criticism on the part of Bruegel is Kunzle D., *From Criminal to Courtier: The Soldier in Netherlandish Art 1550–1672* (Leiden: 2002) 103–112; Ferber "Pieter Bruegel and the Duke of Alva".



Fig. 6. Pieter Bruegel (copy after), *Massacre of the Innocents* (ca. 1566–67). Oil on panel. 116 × 160 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (New York, Art Resource).

protest to his contemporaries, they responded warmly and went on to replicate the image in numerous copies (including the Vienna version), many by Pieter the Younger. In addition, later variants developed into a larger, late-sixteenth-century theme of 'peasants' distress' (*boerenverdriet*), non-biblical depredations visited on rural workers by marauding soldiers (cf. Bruegel, Stockholm, University Coll.).²⁸

The original appearance of the Bruegel composition of the *Massacre of the Innocents* emerges through its copies, which show the very real dangers to children from troops: one dead child lies on the lap of his mother near the center of the composition, while in the foreground, behind a kneeling, pleading man, another toddler is being pulled away from his active, resisting mother by a soldier with a sword. The horror of this scene was too much for some later owner of the Hampton Court original. He transformed the child on the lap into a wrapped package, and the other

²⁸ Kunzle, *From Criminal to Courtier* 35–62, discusses the Massacre of the Innocents theme; for other Alva period images, 134–156; for later depredations of peasants, 167–186, 257–356; also Fishman J., *Boerenverdriet* (New York: 1982).

threatened children metamorphosed into various animals, including geese as well as a goat for the foreground boy; those who are stabbed by the soldiers' lances in the top center of the composition reappear as turkeys.²⁹

References to the contemporary Holy Roman Empire can be understood as updated versions of the original Roman Empire; however, a later owner (probably Emperor Rudolf II in Vienna) had the direct references to imperial identity and culpability for these terrible actions painted out. For example, the mounted horseman, probably a herald, surrounded by pleading parents at the right center once had an imperial double-headed (that is, Habsburg) eagle painted on his tabard, but it has been removed from the Hampton Court version. In similar fashion, the red banner above the cluster of armored horsemen in the top center once showed the five golden crosses of Jerusalem, both the marker for the territory of the Holy Land but also an extended territorial claim of the emperors. Thus Bruegel established 'plausible deniability' (to use modern political speech), should he have been confronted with any charges that he was attacking the authority of the current Empire, the Habsburg cousin of King Philip II of Spain, ruler of the Netherlands. But the image makes clear that Bruegel was already exploring the antinomy we have been exploring between despotic military might and the humble incarnation of the Savior.

Unfortunately, the Hampton Court picture no longer shows the original appearance of the leader of the armored horsemen, who stands watch in the top center over the atrocities that unfold before them across the village square. That figure was also altered, but he appears in the good copies, such as Vienna. In Hampton Court the figure is simply shown in dark distinguishing armor, but in the Vienna version he appears in black robes with a stringy long grey beard. Some scholars have attempted to identify that feature with the bearded figure of the Duke Alba, who arrived from Spain to impose order and discipline in the Netherlands in 1567.³⁰ Yet not only are the comparisons inconclusive, but Bruegel would hardly dare to be so explicit in identifying Alba directly with such a massacre, at the risk of his own freedom in the court center of Brussels. It seems safest to assume that the artist's criticism of tyranny was meant to be indirect,

²⁹ Shawe-Taylor D. – Scott J., *Bruegel to Rubens: Masters of Flemish Painting* [exh. cat., Queen's Gallery] (London: 2007) 88–91, no. 14; Campbell L., *The Early Flemish Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty* (Cambridge: 1985) 13–19, no. 9.

³⁰ Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots* 166–211; Woodall, J. *Anthonis Mor: Art and Authority*, *Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History* 8 (Zwolle: 2007) 173–80, fig. 59; this portrait, however, dates to 1549, making it the image of a man almost twenty years younger.

no more explicitly contemporary in reference than his prior display of the ancient giant Nimrod, commanding the construction of the *Tower of Babel* (1563) or of the contested kingship in the *Suicide of Saul* (1562). He surely suggested contemporary relevance through his use of current red uniforms or armor for the soldiers of the *Massacre*,³¹ just as he did for the persecutors of Jesus in the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1564).

In 1564 Bruegel brought a revisionist formulation to a standard religious subject in his *Adoration of the Magi* (1564; London) [Fig. 7]. This vertical religious narrative adapted several famous models of the late fifteenth century, particularly by Hugo van der Goes and Hieronymus Bosch, as well as other Antwerp *Adorations* from the earlier sixteenth century. But it also forces an attentive viewer to reflect on the very act of seeing and believing.

Many of the features of this painting are indeed conventional. Attention focuses on the centrally placed Madonna and Child. Sitting on her lap as the object of devotion, this child is manifestly unattractive; he squirms awkwardly, seemingly frightened by the strange visitors who approach him. Curiously, this movement derives from another regionally famous visual model: the marble *Madonna and Child* by Michelangelo (ca. 1505), housed in nearby Bruges in the namesake church of Our Lady. That sculpture also features a beautiful Christ Child clasping his mother with his left hand and twisting in space, albeit more as if standing and descending rather than turning to seek maternal shelter. Bruegel has emphatically altered the Child, replacing strength and grace with a shrinking defensiveness and making his holy figures less preternatural and distinctly more human. Moreover, the painter presents this Madonna and Child group directly before the viewer, whose gaze falls at a low viewpoint and across a wide open gap, level with the Virgin, as if from a kneeling or genuflecting position, like the oldest magus. While Mary turns slightly towards the visiting magi and extends her right hand to them, the Christ Child's torsion actually presents his body more directly to the viewer.

Following the conventions of the Adoration subject in art, Bruegel features the three magi, the 'wise men of the East' (*Matthew* 2:1–11). By recent Flemish pictorial tradition, these three kings were associated with the three ages of mankind and with the three known continents – Europe,

³¹ The accuracy of the armor, which would be anachronistic in any case, is attested by Kunzle, *From Criminal to Courtier* 106, citing Wells H.B., "Arms in Bruegel's Slaughter of the Innocents", *Journal of the Arms and Armor Society* 4 (1964) 199.



Fig. 7. Pieter Bruegel, *Adoration of the Magi* (1564). Oil on panel. 111 × 83.5 cm.
London, National Gallery (New York, Art Resource).

Asia, and Africa. European moral superiority due to the adherence to the Christian faith was signaled in Adoration pictures, particularly in Flemish pictures, by the placement of the European figure as the oldest of the magi and the one with white skin and facial features, who occupies the position physically closest to Christ.³²

The most obvious representative of a particular continent is Bruegel's black magus, who stands erect in a white cloak along the right edge of the panel.³³ In the Netherlands the specific representation of one of the three magi as black began sometime in the later fifteenth century, around 1470, either with Hans Memling's *Adoration* (Madrid) or else with Hugo van der Goes's *Monforte Altarpiece* (Berlin), which more strongly emphasized the Asian magus alongside the African black magus in the overall scene.³⁴

The strongest model for Bruegel's black magus, however, is Bosch's own *Adoration of the Magi Triptych* (Madrid), dated just before the end of the fifteenth century.³⁵ Bosch, too, presents the first two magi in the same positions, backed by the black magus in white. In Bosch's composition, a clear distinction is drawn between the gift-bearing visitors and the holy

³² For the tradition of the Three Magi as representatives of the corners of the known globe, especially in the busy port city of Antwerp, see Ewing D., "Magi and Merchants: The Force behind the Antwerp Mannerists' Adoration Pictures", *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (2004–2005) 275–299; also Silver L., *The Paintings of Quinten Massys* (Oxford: 1984) 91–94. For the Jan de Beer Milan *Adoration Triptych*, see Brink P. van den (ed.), *Extravagant!: A Forgotten Chapter of Antwerp Painting, 1500–1530* [exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten] (Antwerp: 2005) 64–66, no. 21.

³³ Kaplan P., *The Rise of the Black Magus in Western Art* (Ann Arbor: 1985); also *Die Heiligen Drei Könige: Darstellung und Verehrung* [exh. cat., Wallraf-Richartz Museum] (Cologne: 1982).

³⁴ Now see Koerner J.L., "The Epiphany of the Black Magus Circa 1500", in Bindman D. – Gates H.L., Jr. (eds.), *The Image of the Black in Western Art III*, pt. I (Cambridge, Mass.: 2010) 7–92. Vos D. de, *Hans Memling. The Complete Works* (Ghent: 1994) 112–114, no. 13 (Prado; dated 1470–72); the *Jan Floreins Triptych*, dated 1479 (Bruges, St. Janshospitaal; ibidem 158–161, no. 32) repeats the Prado composition at a smaller scale. Memling also included a prominent black magus among his many Infancy scenes in a Munich panorama, *Advent and Triumph of Christ* (ibidem 173–179, no. 38, dated to 1480). For Hugo, Vanbeselaere W., "Pieter Bruegel en Hugo van der Goes", *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis* 10 (1944) 221–232; Dhanens E., *Hugo van der Goes* (Ghent: 1998) 186–216; for the problems of dating Hugo's works, esp. the *Monforte Altarpiece*, Sander J., *Hugo van der Goes. Stilentwicklung und Chronologie* (Mainz: 1992) 31–3, 229–234, proposing an earlier dating, just after ca. 1470, for the work.

³⁵ Silver L., *Hieronymus Bosch* (New York: 2006) 164–176, with vast literature; the new, more precise dating is given by Duquenne X., "La famille Scheyfve et Jérôme Bosch", *L'Intermédiaire des Généalogistes* 59, no. 349 (2004) 1–19, who also reveals the commissioning agent to be an Antwerp draper. Cited by Reynolds C., "Patinir and Depictions of Landscape in the Netherlands", in Vergara A. (ed.), *Patinir* [exh. cat., Museo del Prado] (Madrid: 2007) 97, n. 2.

figures, underscored by the bare bark stem that supports this decaying manger and visually separates the two figure groups. The background of Bosch's triptych also features warring armies advancing against each other, something echoed by Bruegel in the upper left of his *Adoration*, where a cluster of onlooking soldiers wear helmets and hold contemporary weapons, pikes and halberds as well as a crossbow. These soldiers not only underscore the absence of the promised messianic era of peace but also embody the real coercive power underlying local Roman authority, which would eventually enact the Crucifixion.

Bruegel's black magus holds a complex gift of multiple components: a golden ship that contains an emerald shell, atop which sits an armillary sphere, which models the cosmos, both the planets and zodiac. This puzzling present references Bosch's *Adoration*, where details on the gifts pose particular problems – they overtly suggest evil by including disturbing decorative details. On the ornamented crown of the aged magus, placed directly before the Madonna, Bosch shows a pair of naked figures holding up a circular mount, which looks like a mirror but perhaps frames a dark gemstone. Atop the crown a pair of gluttonous birds hold large red fruits in their mouths (redolent of Bosch's sensuous world of sin in the central panel of his *Garden of Earthly Delights*; Prado, Madrid).³⁶ Even the golden gift behind the helmet, a sculpted scene of the Sacrifice of Isaac – traditional medieval typology for the Crucifixion – rests upon the backs of nefarious black toads, an unambiguous symbol of evil and pestilence.³⁷ The crown of the middle magus, held by the ominous figure in the doorway of the stable, also features a row of demonic figures, including apes and birds. The black magus also wears ornament trim on his robe that shows hybrid monsters, birds with human heads, and even more large fruit. Yona Pinson has suggested that many of the magi in Netherlandish Adorations secretly signal such dangerous presences, especially through their gifts, particularly from the black magus, youngest of the group.³⁸ Perhaps for this very reason the omniscient Christ Child recoils from them.

³⁶ Silver, *Bosch* 21–78, with bibliography.

³⁷ Vervoort R., "The Pestilent Toad. The Significance of the Toad in the Works of Bosch", in Koldeweij J. – Vermet B. (eds.), with Kooij B. van, *Hieronymus Bosch. New Insights into His Life and Work* (Rotterdam – Ghent: 2001) 145–151.

³⁸ Pinson Y., "Bruegel's 1564 *Adoration*: Hidden Meaning of Evil in the Figure of the Old King", *Artibus et Historiae* 30 (1994) 109–128; eadem, "Connotations of Sin and Heresy in the Figure of the Black King in Some Northern Renaissance Adorations", *Artibus et Historiae* 34 (1996) 159–175. Her principal items of attention in the London *Adoration* are the figures on the hem of the oldest magus and the gift of the black magus. Her views are seconded

Close inspection of the Bruegel *Adoration*, not only of the faces of the magi but also of their followers, reveals simplified but ugly features, sometimes verging on caricature. For example, closest to the black magus a turbaned man, suggesting either paganism or contemporary heathenism in the form of Islam, stands near a one wide-eyed figure wearing spectacles, emblematic of his short-sightedness.³⁹ Gaping mouths of several soldiers in the upper right and the stare of the armored figure behind the Virgin suggest incredulity, surprise, or utter incomprehension before this awesome physical encounter with the holy figures.

Bruegel's *Adoration* includes the protective presence of Joseph, the older man behind the Virgin. Simply dressed, he listens to a whispered remark from one of the skeptical figures in profile near the black magus. Wolfgang Stechow has linked this motif to the tradition of showing Joseph's doubt concerning the virginity of Mary (*Matthew* 1:18–25).⁴⁰ However, here Joseph seems steadfast and patient in his fidelity and faith, even amidst questions from his pressing companion. This contrast between faith and skepticism provides the sustained issue of the painting, just as the contrast between a stubborn ass and a compliant ox appears as a traditional

by Müller J., "Abandonnez toutes les formes d'images". Remarques sur l'iconographie chrétienne de Pieter Bruegel l'Ancien", in Recht R. (ed.), *De la puissance de l'image: les artistes du Nord face à la Réforme* (Paris: 2002) 167–195, esp. 184–90.

³⁹ For images of turbans, associated with Islam and evil in Bosch, e.g., his Frankfurt *Ecce Homo*, see Silver, *Bosch* 147–148. Spectacles usually signal short-sightedness of a more general kind, as if a measure of moral shortcoming; cf. the *Spectacle Seller*, ascribed to Jacob Cornelisz van Oostanen, Groningen Museum (illustrated in Friedländer M.J., *Early Netherlandish Painting* XII [Leiden – Brussels: 1975] 119, no. 288, plate 152). Also see other works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, e.g., *Elck* (1558; British Museum, London); commentary by Jürgen Müller, in Orenstein N. (ed.), *Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Drawings and Prints* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art] (New York: 2001) 169. In similar fashion, eyeglasses sit next to the ass who reads sheet music in *The Ass at School* (1556; Staatliche Museen, Berlin), in *ibidem* 142–44, no. 40.

⁴⁰ Stechow W., *Pieter Bruegel the Elder* (New York: [1969]) 88; this tradition was represented in an Alsatian panel of the early fifteenth century (Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts), where an angel speaks to the waking Joseph, as well as a small Rembrandt oil panel (1645; Berlin, B. 569), where he appears in the darkness of a dream to the sleeping Joseph with Mary indoors. For this theme, Schiller G., *Iconography of Christian Art* (Greenwich, CT: 1971) I 56–57. Müller, "Abandonnez toutes les formes d'images" 186, suggests that this image of Joseph shows him using his hat to cover his genitals as a sign of his 'innocence' of the begetting of Jesus. One of the fuller sources of this legend of Joseph's doubt is the apocryphal Book of James ("Protoevangelium"), Chapters 13–14; see James, M.R. (trans.), *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: 1975; first ed. 1924) 44.

leitmotif in traditional Nativity scenes – a profile of the ass appears directly above the head of Joseph, but here no ox is present.⁴¹

Certainly the uncomprehending or skeptical faces within the retinue suggest that the larger significance of the event is lost on these more ordinary visitors.⁴² Indeed, the white-haired magus might well be pondering the expressly human, markedly male flesh of the infant Jesus; this particular period fascination with the physical, sexed aspect of the Incarnation has been analyzed (with a positive reading) for this painting by Leo Steinberg.⁴³ Like the old magus who seems to stare at the Child and offer his gift without discerning Jesus's true significance, even as he kneels, the background ass – without the ox in this picture – suggests that this is a world of unbelievers or simply people who fail to recognize what they are seeing, because they lack 'insight', the interior, spiritual vision produced by true faith.

This kind of distinction between literal enactment and the essential spiritual substance corresponds to the kind of teaching advanced by Erasmus of Rotterdam within his efforts to reform the Church earlier in the sixteenth-century Netherlands. Perhaps nowhere better stated than in his *Handbook of the Christian Knight* (*Enchiridion militis christiani*), Erasmus distinguishes between 'the inner and outer man': 'If you believe in what takes place at the altar but fail to enter into the spiritual meaning of it, God will despise your flabby display of religion [...]. To place the whole of religion in external ceremonies is sublime stupidity'.⁴⁴ The ugly faces of the magi and the blank stares of their followers suggest that finding the

⁴¹ Schiller, *Iconography* I, 60–61, cites Origen's interpretation of the verse of *Isaiah* 1:3: 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider'. In this reading the ass explicitly symbolizes the Jews, who either did not recognize Christ or rejected him outright.

⁴² Compare the uncomprehending innkeeper or servant who appears in the post-Resurrection subject of the *Supper at Emmaus*. Pericolo L., "Visualizing Appearance and Disappearance: On Caravaggio's *London Supper at Emmaus*", *Art Bulletin* 89 (2007) 519–539, calls him 'clueless'. See also Silver L. – Perlove S., "Rembrandt's Jesus", in Dewitt L. (ed.), *Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus* [exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art] (Philadelphia: 2011) 75–83.

⁴³ Steinberg L., *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (New York: 1983), with the London *Adoration* expressly discussed on p. 67 as part of the 'humanation' of God: 'The action starting from lower left involves the Magus' stare, the Child's crotch and smile, the Virgin's bounteous bosom, the respectful hat of St. Joseph, and the whispered confidence in his ear'. Steinberg clearly sees this painting as less fraught with danger or disbelief, 'This is, after all, a happy occasion'.

⁴⁴ For Massys and Erasmus, Silver, *Massys*, esp. 117–33; for the quotation, Dolan J. (ed.), *The Essential Erasmus* (New York: 1964) 68, 51. Müller J., *Das Paradox als Bildform. Studien zur Ikonologie Pieter Bruegels d.A.* (Munich: 1999), invokes Erasmus as a formative thinker

true significance of this picture will require getting past surface appearances – and that the same challenge extends to the experience of the viewer, occupying a central position within the circle of the magi. Certainly, the Madonna and Child, emphatically more earthy and human than their model by Michelangelo, are deceptively non-sublime in appearance; their true holiness must be discerned through the eye of faith. In the words of 2 *Corinthians* 5 (7, 16) 'For we walk by faith, not by sight. [...] Therefore from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh'.

As in his *Conversion of St. Paul*, Bruegel presented a problem of viewer discernment in his 1564 *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Vienna) [Fig. 8]. He took a popular sixteenth-century religious subject, favored in the previous generation within an expansive landscape, but he altered its visual presentation, making the theme much more obscure amidst all the distracting details. In so doing, he challenges the viewer to sift and recognize the spiritual content of the main subject. The result is a process of discovery leading to revelation, against the grain of the main composition.

Christ Carrying the Cross, Pieter Bruegel's largest painting, presents over a hundred tiny figures swarming across a vast landscape panorama. Its rich yet bewildering detail envelops the observer in a host of vignettes that threaten to overwhelm any sense of the true subject of this picture, even to distinguishing ultimately that it presents a religious subject: *Christ Carrying the Cross*. The reason for all this confusion is the crowd of short, thick, active figures, all dressed in contemporary costume – whether the redcoat soldiers of the mounted imperial horse guard, whose brightness flickers throughout the surface of the image, or else the humbler, drab dress of villagers scurrying along in all directions.⁴⁵ Indeed, only closer inspection reveals to an attentive viewer the small figure of Christ, who has fallen under the cross at the geometrical center of the vast composition, framed by the wooden beams of his burden.

Lone exceptions to the squat contemporary types that dominate the scene, several tall, slender figures with small heads stand on a ridge in the lower right corner; their contrasting archaic dress reveals them to be different in kind from the ant's nest of anonymous characters behind them.

for the visual arts in the sixteenth-century Netherlands, though he does not specifically tie his thought to the London *Adoration*.

⁴⁵ The most attentive examinations of the figures in the setting, particularly in their separate groups, are given by Falkenburg R., "Pieter Bruegels *Kruisdraging*: een proeve van 'close reading'", *Oud Holland* 107 (1993) 17–33; Gregory J.F., *Contemporization as Polemical Device in Pieter Bruegel's Biblical Narratives* (London: 2005). Many of the following observations derive from their insightful analyses.



Fig. 8. Pieter Bruegel, *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1564). Oil on panel. 124 × 170 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (New York, Art Resource).

To a viewer familiar with the history of Flemish painting, these exceptional figures in the corner are revealed as the heirs to types found more than a century earlier in the panels of artists like Rogier van der Weyden (active 1432–1464). Specifically, they compare closely to his swooning Virgin in the arms of John the Evangelist beneath the cross in Rogier's two-panel *Crucifixion* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, ca. 1460).⁴⁶ However, the earlier Flemish painter had isolated his holy figures against a gold background or a red cloth of honor (Philadelphia), whereas in Bruegel's image the holy figures are only distinguished by their elevated location, close to the viewer who overlooks the vast panorama from a foreground ledge in the lower right corner.

Of course, the mournful conduct by these holy figures still offers the proper model of response to the solemn yet saving sacrifice of Jesus for humanity.⁴⁷ Yet these figures expressly turn their backs to the scene of

⁴⁶ Tucker M., "Rogier van der Weyden's Philadelphia *Crucifixion*", *Burlington Magazine* 139 (1997) 676–683.

⁴⁷ For this modeling of proper conduct by holy figures in biblical representations as examples to pious beholders of religious paintings and manuscripts, Büttner F.O., *Imitatio*

the way to Calvary, which unfolds behind them, submerged in the midst of the teeming crowd.⁴⁸ Upon closer inspection, other figures within the crowd also act out the fuller narrative of Christ's Way to Calvary. In particular the pair of thieves who will flank Christ on the cross are making their own way to Golgotha.⁴⁹ They appear directly above the holy figures at the right side of the composition; both ride in a cart with accompanying figures. Their relative positions in the cart anticipate their later placement atop the crosses, with the good thief to Christ's right (that is, viewer left) and the bad thief on the unfavorable viewer right (*sinister* side of Christ), the usual location of Hell in Last Judgment scenes.⁵⁰

Holding a small cross in his bound hands as a sign, however anachronistic, of his nascent conversion, the good thief sits behind and offers his confession to a Franciscan friar.⁵¹ Later, when all three men are on the cross, the good thief will implore, 'Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power' (*Luke* 23:39–43). Meanwhile at the front of the cart the other thief, despite a similar small cross in his own hand, still cries out in despair and seems impervious to the ministrations of a black-robed Dominican beside him; this obvious lack of faith shows him to be the 'bad thief', who will soon refuse even the comfort of Christ himself. He clearly has failed his own test of discernment. Redcoats on horseback guard this wagon of prisoners, while pedestrians behind the cart gape at the condemned. For them, too, this scene of impending execution seems no different from any other public punishment of the day (such as those myriad tortures recorded by Bruegel in his image of *Justice* from his print designs for a series of the Seven Virtues, 1559; Brussels).

Bruegel's figures are dressed for the most part like ordinary Flemish villagers. But Bruegel does place the cart with the thieves at a point where it

pietatis. Motive der christlichen Ikonographie als Modelle zur Verähnlichung (Berlin: 1983), esp. 89–105 on the Virgin and her companions during the Passion.

⁴⁸ Müller, *Paradox als Bildform* 136–142, esp. 140–141, comments on the fact that these holy figures exemplify the 'cross within us' as laid out by Erasmus in his *Enchiridion militis christiani* (*Handbook of the Christian Knight*, 1503).

⁴⁹ For the full Crucifixion, including discussion of the good vs. bad thieves, Merback M., *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel. Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: 1999), esp. 218–265.

⁵⁰ In full Crucifixion narratives often the bad thief is depicted falling into the hands of a devil, or else the figure is shown in anguished contortion on the cross. Correspondingly, the good thief either is accompanied by an angel or appears more tranquil and stoical in enduring his torment.

⁵¹ Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel* 222–230, emphasizes the role of Franciscans in setting up the contrast between good (Dysmas) and bad thieves as moral exempla, particularly concerning Church discipline of confession and penance.

crosses a small stream. Reindert Falkenburg interprets this body of water as a reference to a New Testament site (*John* 18:1), the brook of Kidron, where King Asa (2 *Chronicles* 15:16; 1 *Kings* 15:13) had earlier destroyed an idol.⁵² But other, more general biblical references point to danger by drowning, such as *Psalms* 69: 'Save me O God; For the waters are come in even unto the soul'. And of course, crossing water would also allude to the sacrament of baptism, the ultimate moment of conversion, the choice placed before each of the thieves in the presence of Jesus. Whether this stream in the picture should be read allegorically, either as the passage of conversion or else as the bog of sinfulness that requires avoidance or extrication, the cart is still about to cross it, and the driver figure, who rides behind the horses as they draw the cart, deliberately lifts his feet to avoid getting them wet, thus avoiding any encounter with the water.

Yet the other most explicit element of religious narrative in Bruegel's *Way to Calvary* is a vignette concerning the assistance – or lack of it – accorded to Jesus with his heavy burden. Specifically, he features a couple engaged in a struggle just above the site on the left half of the painting that corresponds to the upraised heads of the holy figures. A soldier in striped pants accosts the husband with the pointed end of his halberd weapon, as another pulls him forward forcibly to come and assist Jesus with the heavy burden of the cross. Nevertheless, he resists their tugs and drags his feet as he turns to implore his wife for help. She in turn struggles to restrain him and grabs his shoulder to pull back against his involuntary recruitment. Ironically, despite the effort visible on her weathered old face, the wife has an (anachronistic) rosary at her belt, so her resistance to providing aid to Jesus is revealed to be a most un-Christian form of hypocrisy, observing the letter but not the spirit of true Christian compassion.⁵³ Scholars have long recognized that this scene stages a non-textual

⁵² Falkenburg, "Bruegels *Kruisdraging*" 29–30; Gregory refers instead to an apocryphal Secret Passion, which features either the dragging of Christ himself through the brook of Kidron or else casting Jesus into a pool of filth outside the gates of Jerusalem; cf. Marrow J., *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Kortrijk: 1979) 95–170. The Asa episode was invoked by Luther as part of his criticism of idolatry and was illustrated (no. 212) in the Luther Bible.

⁵³ This hypocrisy is well discussed by Müller, *Paradox als Bildform*, esp. 137, citing the contrast between internal and external religiosity as defined by Erasmus in his *Enchiridion militis christianis* (1503). See also Stridbeck C.G., *Bruegelstudien* (Stockholm: 1956) 250: 'the key for the moral lesson of the representation at hand, namely the indifference of man in the face of the suffering of Christ, which is a picture of that hypocrisy that takes the place of true religiosity with most people. The main content, therefore, is the contrast between the sufferings of Christ and the indifference of mankind'.

prelude to a well-known legend connected to the Passion and repeated in the emerging Stations of the Cross in the late Middle Ages: the figure of Simon of Cyrene, 'coming from the country', who was 'compelled' to carry the cross along with Christ (*Luke* 23:26; *Mark* 15:21; *Matthew* 27:32).⁵⁴ Bruegel contradicts the traditional model of pious and compassionate behavior by Simon and shows instead the selfishness of both of these country folk, drafted against their will to participate in the actual face of real need. Simon has dropped a bound lamb – sacrificial animal symbolic of Christ himself – that he was carrying to market. Once more a crowd gathers to gape at those unfortunates, caught up in the process of punishment, just like the onlookers alongside the cart carrying the two thieves.

This attentive spectatorship to accessory figures makes the corresponding lack of attention by the crowd to Christ's plight all the more striking – a form of spiritual inattention that can be characterized only as spiritual blindness.⁵⁵ It also contrasts with the inner sight and spiritual enlightenment of the holy figures on the foreground hillside, who do not even need to turn towards the cross in order to know – in advance – its deep spiritual significance as a salvific sacrifice for humanity. Of course, we viewers too fail to note the presence of Christ on casual inspection of this large, crowded panel. Closer examination, however, of the figure of Christ, fallen under the cross, reveals only tormentors above and beside him. Some of them press down, adding to the weight of the cross; amidst the ugly faces stands a fool, dressed in the distinctive asses' ears and oversized bells. At the same time, some of the mounted or walking figures who stand just below Christ and the cross manifestly turn away from him and present their backs as they stare in the direction of Simon of Cyrene.

Thus the vast crowd of ordinary peasants, squat and stout and scattered across the expanse of this setting, succumbs to the varied array of distractions – whether the thieves in the cart, the tussle around Simon of Cyrene, or just the process of going to market or to a public execution. Their mask-like faces are simple and caricatured. And, as Joseph Gregory cogently reminds us, they are all dressed as contemporaries, conveying

⁵⁴ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* II 78–82. For Simon of Cyrene as the prototype of the individual pious Christian, who empathetically takes up the cross with Jesus, see Büttner, *Imitatio pietatis* 56–62.

⁵⁵ Spiritual blindness is the overall theme of this picture according to Falkenburg, "Bruegels *Kruisdraging*" 17–33; see also Falkenburg R., "Marginal Motifs in Early Flemish Landscape Painting", in Muller N. – Rosasco B. – Marrow J. (eds.), *Herri met de Bles. Studies and Explorations of the World Landscape Tradition* (Turnhout: 1998) 153–170, esp. 166–167 for the Vienna *Way to Calvary*.

the message of their spiritual blindness in a quotidian world and revealing their distance from the holy figures and the true significance of the Carrying of the Cross.⁵⁶

Seeing truly, therefore, becomes the theme of this entire panel, as the vast sweep of the procession, punctuated by the bright red coats of the mounted soldiers, curves around from the left center to recede to the right distance, where a crowd is forming in a circle at Golgotha, marking the precinct of the destined punishment upon the crosses. One pious figure, bearded and in profile – even interpreted by Jürgen Müller and Joseph Gregory as a self-portrait of Bruegel – does see clearly.⁵⁷ He stands modestly at the right edge of the painting, beside the trunk that forms the base of a torture wheel above in echo of the circle of Golgotha at the upper right. A second man in dark clothing clasps the trunk; he has a distressed look in his large and pensive eyes, and he seems not to look in the direction of the cross, though his grief seems profound (Gregory even identifies him with despairing Judas, though he lacks the yellow clothing and red hair often used to designate that character). A few nuns, turning toward Jesus with dramatically mournful gestures, link these observers at right to the group of the holy figures on the right foreground rise.

Bruegel's composed landscape also contains calculated contrasts, particularly between the two sides. At the left edge, balancing the dead tree with torture wheel at the right, rises another tree, sporting leafy foliage. Similar contrasts color the skies across the expanse of the painting: a sunny left side gives way over the span of the procession to an increasingly lowering dark sky, with thick clouds and flying dark carrion crows above the Golgotha mount at the upper right.

In the center the high hill with the windmill contrasts vertically with the dominant horizontal format of the panel in general. Moreover, this steep hill presents a formidable climb in contrast to the seated comfort of the peddler directly below it; close inspection shows that a tiny figure atop the rock peers down and faces the viewer, providing an inverse to

⁵⁶ An interpretation opposite to this contrast is provided by Genaille R., "La Montée au Calvaire de Bruegel l'Ancien", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1979) 143–196, esp. 173–187, who assumes that Bruegel's later sympathy for the peasant should carry over to this presentation of a religious subject, even though the peasant mode is a sharp contrast to the tall and slender representation of the holy figures in the manner of van der Weyden.

⁵⁷ The first to propose a self-portrait for this bearded figure was Auner M., "Pieter Bruegel – Umrisse eines Lebensbildes", *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 52 (1956) 107–108.

the peddler's back in the foreground. This contrast suggests the arduous upward path of virtue compared to the easy, wide path of pleasure and worldliness.⁵⁸ The broad plain of worldliness in the horizontal expanse is where the peasants and soldiers carry on life as usual.

Several scholars have interpreted the windmill atop the rock symbolically.⁵⁹ It can be seen in its role as the grinder of grain, source of life and of the Christian eucharist, and thus a clear link to the sacrifice of Christ as the bread of life (*John* 6:51). Walter Gibson also evokes the poetry of Bruegel's contemporary, Jan van den Berghe, *Leenhof der gilden* (1564), which uses the windmill as an image to symbolize frequent and easy change, blowing with every change of wind.⁶⁰ The turning of the wheel also suggests the cyclical passage of time and the recurrence of the everyday. In Christian terms this raises the late medieval notion of the 'perpetual Passion', which holds that the sins of humanity continually torment Christ and that meditation on the Passion in the present provides a proper mood of pious penitence.⁶¹ In this respect, as Gibson first noted, the shape of the windmill's intersecting vanes evokes both the recurrence and the shape of meditation on the cross. Importantly, Bruegel turns the windmill so that its cruciform blades face towards Golgotha, where two crosses already stand in place, awaiting the arrival of Jesus with his own cross.

Reindert Falkenburg has called attention in earlier Flemish landscapes with the Carrying of the Cross to the antithetical imagery, heightened in its contrast by Bruegel for the Vienna painting by the massive uplift of the

⁵⁸ See Panofsky E., *Hercules am Scheidewege* (Leipzig – Berlin: 1930), as well as his discussion of the *paysage moralisé* relative to Dürer's *Hercules* engraving (ca. 1500); see Panofsky E., *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: 1955) 73–76; see also Busch W., "Lucas van Leydens 'Grosse Hagar' und die augustinische Typologie-auffassung der Vorreformation", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 45 (1982) 97–129, for Lucas's engraving of a *paysage moralisé* in his early engraving, *Expulsion of Hagar*. More generally see Falkenburg, *Joachim Patinir*.

⁵⁹ Gibson W., "Mirror of the Earth": *The World Landscape in Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting* (Princeton: 1989) 68–69; idem, "Bosch's Boy with a Whirligig: Some Iconographical Speculations", *Simiolus* 8 (1975–76) 9–15. A different interpretation is Pierce J.S., "The Windmill on the Road to Calvary", *New Lugano Review* 11–12 (1976) 48–55, which argues expressly for the eucharistic significance.

⁶⁰ Gibson, "Mirror of the Earth" 69, no. 84. See also the allegorical interpretations of Jacob van Ruisdael's windmills, itemized (somewhat disapprovingly) by Slive S., *Jacob van Ruisdael* [exh. cat., Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University] (Cambridge, MA: 1982) 114–116, no. 39, through emblems of the seventeenth century, e.g., Zacharias Heyns (1625), 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'.

⁶¹ Discussing the title pages of Albrecht Dürer's 1511 Passion woodcut series, Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* 138–39; Price D.H., *Albrecht Dürer's Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: 2003) 126, 181.

central rock and windmill set against the broad expanse of the procession itself.⁶² Once more, the touchstone for this metaphor is Christ's own parable (*Matthew* 7:13–14) about the narrow gate and steep path to eternal life versus the 'broad way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it'. Bruegel counters the left-to-right movement of Jesus with the cross with a countervailing movement by peasants on their way to the city (Jerusalem) for market, especially at the left edge of the panel, where their backs are turned to the viewer as they make their way. This is the same purpose that Simon of Cyrene and his wife were also pursuing when they were rudely interrupted in their everyday, material existence by the intrusion of history in the form of Roman soldiers accompanying the cross.

In similar fashion, Bruegel's large 1566 painting, *The Preaching of St. John the Baptist* (Budapest) [Fig. 9] presents a crowded human vista of a diverse population at the edge of a forest clearing. All are listening to the sermon of the saint, the 'voice crying in the wilderness' (*John* 1:23; *Matthew* 3:1–6). This image, too, held enduring popularity and was copied by both of the artist's sons, Pieter the Younger and Jan Brueghel (1598: Basel; Munich). It need not signal Bruegel's own sympathies with Calvinism; after all, the artist was buried in a Catholic tomb in Notre-Dame de la Chapelle in Brussels and commemorated there by his son Jan, who worked for the regents of Flanders, Archdukes Albert and Isabella. But his vivid image of the biblical sermon by the Baptist certainly would have held topicality for viewers in Antwerp in 1566, a year when Calvinist hedge preachers met large crowds outside the city limits.⁶³

Dressed in simple brown robes, the Baptist stands at the top center of the expansive horizontal image, a small figure immersed in the crowd. From the convergence of two tall tree trunks he faces the viewer and gestures, even while enveloped by listeners, many of whom are seen from behind their backs. Their range of responses – rapt attention, bored distraction, sleeping – resembles the congregation within the church space of Bruegel's earlier print design for *Faith* (1559; Amsterdam).

Closest to the viewer in the foreground sits a conventional pilgrim, carrying a staff and wearing a hat covered with pilgrim's badges, including the scallop shell of Saint James, Santiago de Compostela, and the

⁶² Falkenburg R., "Antithetical Iconography in Early Netherlandish Landscape Painting", *Bruegel and Netherlandish Landscape Painting* [exh. cat., National Museum of Western Art] (Tokyo: 1990) 25–33.

⁶³ Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots* 71–72, 85–88.



Fig. 9. Pieter Bruegel, *Preaching of John the Baptist* (1566). Oil on panel. 95 × 160.5 cm. Budapest, Szépművészeti Museum (New York, Art Resource).

x-shaped cross of St. Anthony. Beside him sits another vagrant figure: a gypsy woman with her characteristic flat round hat, known from Netherlandish painting as early as the beginning fifteenth century (for example, Robert Campin's *Entombment Triptych*, London, Courtauld Institute), but such figures also appear in paintings by a Bruegel contemporary, Cornelis van Dalem.⁶⁴ The word 'gypsy' in English comes from the word 'Egyptian', the supposed region of origin of these figures as outsiders to Europe, as verified by their presence in the landscape of a lost van Dalem *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (1565; formerly Berlin). In Bruegel's painting this woman and her bearded, long-haired mate might imply the time and place of the Holy Land, but the man is telling the fortune of a well-dressed, darkly clad, urban burgher by reading his palm, so they interact directly with the contemporary world of Bruegel (indeed, some scholars have seen the burgher as a self-portrait by the artist). To the left of the foreground tree appears a woman who travels with a drinking-can on her back and a standing figure wearing a turban of a distinctly Ottoman fashion. Also included in

⁶⁴ Cuttler C., "Exotics in Fifteenth Century Art: Comments on Oriental and Gypsy Costume", in Vanwijngaerden F. (ed.), *Liber amicorum Herman Liebaers* (Brussels: 1984) 419–434; Pokorny E., "The Gypsies and their Impact on Fifteenth-Century Western European Iconography", in Anderson J. (ed.), *Crossing Cultures* (Melbourne: 2009) 623–627; on Cornelis van Dalem, Grossmann F., "Cornelis van Dalem Re-Examined", *Burlington Magazine* 96 (1954) 42–51.

the group is a pair of monks in their robes standing near the tree at the right behind a soldier wearing his broadsword. Clearly the image means to proclaim the universality of the Gospel message, addressed to both exotic and domestic audiences, visitors from far and near.⁶⁵

Just as these two gypsy figures confuse or dissolve the boundary between past and present, between Holy Land and the Netherlands hedge preaching of 1566, so does Bruegel pose larger questions of discernment for the viewer. Just to find the key figure of John the Baptist in the midst of this sea of faces takes careful scrutiny on the part of the viewer. But even more obscure, the tiny standing figure of Jesus appears, dressed in bluish robes, at right just beyond the extended left arm of the Baptist. Not only is it difficult to discover the figures of the Baptist or of Christ within the picture, but it also is nearly impossible to see the diminutive scene of the Baptism itself, which takes place as a crowd activity at the bend of the river in the haze, visible just above the crowd and below the horizon. This obscurity of the main subjects offers a marked contrast with earlier sixteenth-century versions of the same subject by the main painters of religious scenes in landscapes: Joachim Patinir and Herri met de Bles chiefly.⁶⁶

Though Bruegel seldom portrayed the adult Christ prominently and in full view, he did produce a finished drawing of the *Resurrection* (ca. 1562–63, Rotterdam), later engraved at nearly the same size by Philips Galle for publication in Antwerp by Hieronymus Cock [Fig. 10]. In all likelihood, this drawing, considerably abraded, was formulated as an independent work rather than as a design for an engraving, since the blessing hand of Christ, by tradition his right hand, is reversed in the print to a left-handed gesture.

In his *Resurrection*, Bruegel once more engages the same issue of seeing and believing. The pious women (five rather than the traditional three Maries) come to the tomb (*Matthew* 28:1–7) at the very moment of another earthquake, in echo of the earlier moment of Christ's demise upon the

⁶⁵ A similar universalism with even more varied, exotic figures in costume appears in Rembrandt's Berlin grisaille, *The Preaching of St. John the Baptist* (ca. 1634; Berlin); see Perlove S. – Silver L., *Rembrandt's Faith* (University Park, PA: 2009) 264–269.

⁶⁶ Vergara (ed.), *Patinir* 342–357, nos. 27–28 (Philadelphia, Brussels), as well as the background of his *Baptism* (Vienna), 216–225, no. 11. On met de Bles, Chong A., "Cleveland's *Landscape with John the Baptist* by Herri Bles: A Landscape with Figures or Figures in a Landscape?", in Land – Rosasco – Marrow (eds.), *Herri met de Bles* 85–94; Gibson W., "Herri met de Bles: *Landscape with St. John the Baptist Preaching*", *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 55 (1968) 78–87. More generally, see Gibson, "Mirror of the Earth". Other notable *Preaching of St. John the Baptist* pictures by met de Bles are in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum) and Dresden (Gemäldegalerie).



Fig. 10. Pieter Bruegel, *Resurrection of Christ* (ca. 1562–63). Engraving by Philips Galle. 45.1 × 33 cm. London, British Museum.

cross, when graves also were opened. According to the Gospel text, the soldier guardians quake with fear at the sight of the angel, who informs the Maries that Christ has risen and is 'not here'. Bruegel shows Christ at the top center of the drawing in the midst of clouds, while the more prosaic, literal-minded soldiers are inspecting the empty tomb or shielding their eyes from the sudden light of the angel. Light against the nocturnal darkness also plays a major role: the Galle engraving emphasizes the rising sun of Easter, symbol of the new era of grace, at the horizon behind the Maries. This glow (abraded in the drawing) underscores the existing visual rhyme between the haloes of both angel and resurrected Christ, even as it contrasts with the lantern hanging above the sleeping soldiers. Bruegel's *Resurrection* presents a fundamental contrast between light/enlightenment – available to the viewer of the drawing or print – versus darkness and the limited understanding of the soldiers who fail even to perceive the angel that confronts them.

Bruegel's *Resurrection* also shows the artist's ongoing preoccupation with soldiers, as well as with their weapons: halberds and axes carried by the helmeted figures at the mouth of the cave, plus the crossbow and winch in the lower center of the image. In the *Adoration of the Magi* the figures of soldiers and their weapons occupy the upper left of the composition. They provide the contrast between internal and surface spirituality – a marked contrast between royal might in the form of mighty armies with modern weapons and the humble presentation of true divinity in the isolated forms of holy figures, led by a God made flesh.

Bruegel seldom showed the wider Christian community in his work, but shortly after depicting his foreground holy figures in *Christ Carrying the Cross*, he did make a couple of modest pictures, small in scale and painted without colors in *grisaille* tones. As if to reinforce the plea for a universal Church rather than a factionalized, sectarian religion of denominations, Bruegel produced a 1565 panel of *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* (London, Courtauld Institute).⁶⁷ This event derives from the *Gospel of John* (8:3–9), and draws sharp distinctions between the apostles and their Jewish opponents. In this scene the scribes and Pharisees attempt to put before Jesus an impossible choice: either to stone a woman guilty of adultery according to the letter of Jewish law or else to defy their law in forgiving her sin. Bruegel clearly contrasts the two groups on either half of

⁶⁷ Grossmann F., "Bruegel's 'Woman Taken in Adultery' and Other Grisailles", *Burlington Magazine* 94 (1952) 218–229.

his composition. At the right stand the bearded or capped Jewish elders, with a prominent book at the waist of the rightmost figures. On the opposite side in the shadows stands the group of apostles, framing the central standing figure of the humbled woman. But humbly kneeling before her, Jesus solves his dilemma by writing in the dirt (in Dutch rather than in Latin), 'He who is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her'. Each individual's conscience wins out, so the retreating figures behind the woman in Bruegel's picture are departing in shame, and the Pharisees are confounded. This meaningful presentation of the narrative offers moving gestural clarity in its main figures, especially emphatic about the humility of Jesus himself, horizontal in posture beside the vertical figure of the abashed woman. But Bruegel adds a small personal note to the image: he signs the work in the lower left corner with precisely the same lettering as the message in the dirt by Jesus, to suggest that he fully subscribes to this message of mercy, tolerance, and unmerited grace.

Pieter Bruegel the Younger made a copy of this work in color (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Johnson Coll.), probably based upon a posthumous engraving of 1579 by Pieter Perret. The copy is easier to read, but also alters the effects of the grisaille: by eliminating the carefully calibrated shadows that serve to highlight the principals, it reduces the need for close looking to discern both the apostles and the retreating figures. Pieter the Younger's stiffer, stouter figures make clear how much these larger figures, at once more slender and solemn in their movements, extend Bruegel's achievements of 1564, both in the holy figures of the foreground of *Christ Carrying the Cross* as well as the *Adoration of the Magi*. In this case, the greater dignity and gravity of these figures signals a shift in his religious art towards the monumental, but in the ultimate service of underscoring divine mercy.

Even before the birth of Jesus Bruegel shows how his parents were manipulated by Roman imperial control, when 'a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered' (*Luke* 2:1–5). Specifically, that moment appears in his 1566 painting of 1566, the *Census at Bethlehem* (Brussels) [Fig. 11], although the subject of the picture remains fully obscure on first viewing, and must be discovered – much like the *Fall of Icarus* (Brussels) or the 1563 *Adoration of the Magi in the Snow* (Winterthur, Reinhart Coll.). Like the latter image, this scene is set in a characteristic Flemish village, viewed from the artist's favored high vantage point during a snowy winter day. Here the largest crowd has assembled outside the window of a run-down tavern; meanwhile, across the foreground



Fig. 11. Pieter Bruegel, *Census at Bethlehem* (1566). Oil on panel. 115.3 × 164.5 cm. Brussels, Koninklijke Museum voor Schone Kunsten. (New York, Art Resource).

appear seasonal activities, such as slaughtering a pig at the end of the growing season and the route taken by various figures who cross the solid ice on foot.⁶⁸ At the tavern a local scribe, dressed in a dark, fur-trimmed robe, is inscribing individuals into his ledger. Just under the eave of the roof, a signboard with a double-headed eagle marks the site as an outpost of the (currently Holy) Roman Empire. Here again Bruegel mingles the present with the past. What we see happening, then, is that very imperial registration, operating locally at the main public house of the village on behalf of the Roman Empire of Caesar. While all the individuals who head across the snow towards the tavern are gathering in this village for the same purpose, only when the viewer recognizes the scene's biblical significance beneath its otherwise contemporary genre appearance can the invisible holy figures be revealed.

Close inspection just to the right of center in the foreground along the edge of the ice reveals the Virgin Mary, clad in her traditional blue cloak

⁶⁸ These preparations for winter are among the activities that exemplify *Prudence* in Bruegel's drawing design for the print in the *Virtues* series for Cock (1559; Brussels, Musées Royaux), where salting meat for storage and laying in wood for warmth are central activities.



Fig. 12. Pieter Bruegel, *Flight into Egypt* (1563). Oil on panel. 37.1 × 55.6 cm. London, Courtauld Institute of Art (New York, Art Resource).

but without any markings of the supernatural, just as Bruegel had shown her in his 1564 London *Adoration of the Magi*. She is riding on an ass, just as she is depicted in Bruegel's 1563 *Flight into Egypt* [Fig. 12], and she is accompanied by an ox, making up the traditional contrasting animals of the Nativity and Adoration scenes (visible in the background stall of the London *Adoration*). Finally, Joseph leads the way across the snow, though his face is covered by his flat straw hat, just as in the 1563 *Flight*. He can be recognized from his carpenter's saw, carried over his shoulder, as well from his basket of other tools.

It should be noted that the *Census at Bethlehem* was one of the most popular of all Bruegel pictures, frequently copied by his son, Pieter the Younger, in panels close in size to the large scale of the 1566 original.⁶⁹ Surely one reason for this popularity is the very process of recognizing the holy figures – a personal epiphany, irrespective of the viewer's sectarian affiliation as either Catholic or Calvinist. Indeed, Pieter the Younger also

⁶⁹ Pieter Breughel de Jonge – Jan Brueghel de Oude. *Een Vlaamse schildersfamilie rond 1600* [exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten] (Antwerp: 1998) 294–298, nos. 97–98; Brink P. van den (ed.), *Brueghel Enterprises* [exh. cat., Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels (Ghent: 2001) 80–124, 134–148, nos. 1–13, the total of known copies.

made numerous copies of the 1563 Winterthur *Adoration of the Magi in the Snow*, where the same process operates – recognition of a religious subject within a seeming genre picture.⁷⁰

It would surely be too extreme to characterize Pieter Bruegel as a crypto-Calvinist, despite his clear reference to contemporary occurrences, such as religious hedge preaching in his *Preaching of St. John the Baptist*. Yet some Bruegel images also suggest the artist's nostalgia for a unified Church or his plea for humility (*Census at Bethlehem*) or for toleration and forgiveness (*Christ and the Woman in Adultery*) rather than violent confrontation. Certainly he seems to give increasingly explicit suggestions about his patriotic discomfort with foreign rule through the regent and her advisers, especially the hated Duke of Alba (*Massacre of the Innocents*, *Conversion of St. Paul*). Seen now in the context of his overall oeuvre, his *Christ Carrying the Cross* and *Adoration of the Magi*, both of 1564, already epitomize the importance of true piety and recognizing the holy figures within a larger crowd of humanity, even when humble or hidden, while also turning away from conflict and persecution, especially on political and/or religious grounds. Across his religious compositions, the presence of soldiers and weapons inevitably threatens the holy figures and challenges their spiritual prominence with worldly power.

Pieter Bruegel left us no writings to convey his own beliefs or verbal interpretations of biblical events. But Bruegel's paintings, in this case created within the narrow time span of 1562–1567, can provide their own exegetical patterns, albeit often with negative exemplars, which offer antithesis and contrast rather than typology and harmony.

The Massacre of the Innocents should be seen as a counterpoint to its consequence, *The Flight into Egypt*, already painted by Bruegel a few years earlier (1563; London, Courtauld Institute). Against the grain of habitual left-to-right reading, the holy figures make their way across the foreground to our left. One detail, initiated in earlier versions of this subject in Antwerp pictures by Joachim Patinir and repeated by Bruegel at his foreground shrine at the lower right corner, a falling idol, topples to the ground in the very presence of the holy figures.

The biblical source for the scene (*Matthew* 2:13–14) recounts how the holy family was warned by an angel in a dream of Joseph to go up to Egypt in order to escape the wrath of Herod, which precipitated the Massacre of the Innocents. But the incident with the idols was elaborated in

⁷⁰ Van den Brink, *Brueghel Enterprises* 149–159, nos. 14–21.

a apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, chapter 23: 'When Mary and the Child entered, all the idols fell, and Isaiah's word [19:1] was fulfilled. "Behold the Lord shall come upon a light cloud and enter into Egypt, and all the gods made by the hand of the Egyptians shall be moved before his face"'.⁷¹ Ironically, the idol is housed in a peasant roadside shrine, the kind usually reserved for Marian cult images in Northern Europe, including Flanders.⁷² In effect, Bruegel has collapsed the time differences between the biblical period and his own, showing how the shrines set aside for pagan idols were superseded by the advent of the true religion, first through the physical presence of the holy family, but in the contemporary world through the statues of Madonna and Child, surrogates for the figures in flight. We might even see here an early manifestation of Bruegel's own emerging sympathy for peasants' culture, here their deep, if simple faith – so cruelly tested by the marauding imperial soldiers.

The forms of the holy figures themselves appear like reprises of the same two characters as in the *Adoration of the Magi*. These same two figures will reappear with much the same costume (Mary again in blue) and donkey transport as the foreground figures in Bruegel's 1566 *Census at Bethlehem* (Brussels). Additionally, the meaningful association from Bruegel's earlier landscape prints pertains here – the highlands serve as a spiritual retreat, in this case a refuge of safety.

⁷¹ Identified by Koch R., *Joachim Patinir* (Princeton: 1968) 24, n. 19. James, *Apocryphal New Testament* 75.

⁷² Harline C., *Miracles at the Jesus Oak* (New York: 2003), esp. 11–15, discusses statues of the Virgin that appeared in a tree, usually an oak, where miracles occurred; Zirka Zaremba Filipczak, working on popular Marian shrines in Flanders, presented a paper, "Trees Growing in the Wilderness and Miracle-Working Statues of Madonnas", at the CIHA congress in Melbourne, 2008. Among documented cult shrines of the Virgin in Flanders associated with trees: Our Lady of the Holy Oak in Oirschot, Our Lady of the Lime Tree at Osterwijk, Our Lady of the Oak at Meerveldhoven, Our Lady of the Little Stock at Antwerp, Our Lady of the Cherry Tree at Edelaere, Our Lady of Grace at Scheut. On tree shrines in the Low Countries generally, see Chalon J., *Les arbres fétiches de la Belgique* (Antwerp: 1912). On Antwerp, see Philippen L., *Le culte de Notre Dame 't Stocxken en Anvers, 1474–1580* (Antwerp: 1925). For similar shrines in Germany, see Wood C., *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape* (Chicago: 1993) 181–190, noting the presence of such *Bildstöcke* at crossroads and their visible presence on the outside wings of Bosch's *Haywain Triptych* (Madrid, Prado) or even in the landscape setting of Bruegel's Prague *Haymaking* (1565). Such images risked the practice of idolatry and reminded reformers, including Luther and Zwingli, of pagan idols.

Conclusions

Alongside the contrast between internal and surface spirituality, Bruegel's oeuvre sets royal might in the form of mighty armies with modern weapons in opposition to the humble presentation of true divinity in the isolated forms of holy figures, led by a God made flesh. In this overall visual exegesis, we have consistently found, as in St. Paul's epistles, an antithesis between the eras of law and grace. Overweening, pride-filled, Old Testament kingship and its warlike despotism shifts into the New Testament negative role of violent antagonists, Herod and the Empire, who oppose Jesus himself and the nascent Christian community. By contrast, they exemplify humble, merciful comportment and the promise of peace.

One of Bruegel's admirers and patrons, the compiler of the first atlas in Antwerp in 1570, Abraham Ortelius candidly declared his concern for the disordered times to his cousin Emmanuel van Metern in mid-December 1567, during the onset of Alba's repression:

We live in a very disordered time, which we have little hope of seeing very soon improved, as I fear that it will receive a greater shock, so that the patient will soon be entirely prostrate, being threatened with so many and varied illnesses, as the Catholic evil, the Gueux [Revolt] fever, and the Huguenot [Calvinist] dysentery, mixed with other vexations. [...] All this we have deserved through our sins; for we are motivated by pride and ambition; every one wishes to be called, but not to be good; every one wishes to teach others, but not to humble himself; to know much and to do little, to dominate others, but not to bow under God's hand. May He be merciful to us, and grant us to see our faults.⁷³

Whether or not, in echo of Ortelius, we see implicit political resistance to Spanish rule in Bruegel's use of Old Testament tyranny or New Testament villainous persecution of Christians, Bruegel's oeuvre still displays a consistent biblical outlook, presenting New Testament holy figures as paragons of humility, mercy, and faith, who can provide conversion, reversal, and – ultimately – redemption.

⁷³ Quoted by Grossmann F., "Bruegel's 'Woman Taken in Adultery' and Other Grisailles", *The Burlington Magazine* 94 (1952) 226, n. 37, from J.A. Hessels's edition of Ortelius's letters (1887) no. 23.

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VI. EMBLEMATIC IMAGES AND THE DISCERNMENT
OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

FROM *PUTTI* TO ANGELS: THE CELESTIAL CREATURES IN OTTO VAENIUS' PAINTINGS AND EMBLEMS

Nathalie de Brézé

The distinction between a putto and an angel has been well defined by Charles Dempsey: a putto is the product of an artist's imagination, since he is not the subject of a biblical or mythological story, whereas angels are clearly described in the Bible as messengers of God.¹ They are mentioned over 370 times, and have been depicted in most the religious paintings since the Middle Ages. Putti and angels do not have the same function in images, since, in most cases, the former are 'ornaments in action'² and the latter play a narrative part. Therefore, the relation between these creatures and the viewer can be quite different – putti distract him while angels help him in his spiritual meditation.

The aim of this paper is to study how a *pictor doctus* such as Otto Vaenius used such figures in paintings, engravings, and emblems, emphasizing some allegorical iconographies that have been, for the most part, invented by him. It is unnecessary to specify that Vaenius is mainly known as Rubens' last master and for having written and illustrated a few emblem books, which have been well studied recently.³ Like his emblem books,

¹ Dempsey C., *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: 2001). See also Prévost B., "La danse des putti", *Critique* 4 (2004) 269–279.

² Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* 34.

³ On Otto Vaenius, see Haberditzl F.M., "Die Lehrer des Rubens", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 27 (1908) 161–235; Müller-Hofstede J., "Zum Werke des Otto van Veen, 1590–1600", *Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 6 (1957) 127–174; idem, *Otto van Veen, der Lehrer des P.P. Rubens* (Ph.D. Universität Freiburg im Breisgau: 1959). On Vaenius' emblem books, see Gerards-Nelissen I., "Otto van Veen's *Emblemata horatiana*", *Simiolus* 5 (1971) 20–63; Buschhoff A., "Zur gedanklichen Struktur der *Amoris divini emblemata* des Otto van Veen (Antwerpen 1615)", in Manning J. – Porteman K. – Van Vaeck M. (eds.), *The Emblem Tradition and the Low Countries* (Turnhout: 1999) 39–76; Brunon C.-F., "Réflexion, réfraction et diffraction dans les *Amoris divini emblemata* de Vaenius", in Choné P. (ed.), *Le Point de vue de l'emblème* (Quétingny: 2001) 87–96; Thøfner M., "'Let your desire be to see God': Theresian Mysticism and Otto van Veen's *Amoris divini emblemata*", *Emblematica* 12 (2002) 83–103; Bloemendal J., "Een emblematicus en zijn inspiratie. De bronnen van Otto Vaenius' *Amoris divini emblemata*, Antwerpen 1615 – ontlening en adaptatie", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde* 118 (2002) 273–287; Thøfner M., "Making a Chimera: Invention, Collaboration and the Production of Otto Vaenius's *Emblemata Horatiana*", in Adams A. – Van der Weij M. (eds.),

his paintings and drawings may be read according to various sources. His career developed in a humanist circle and, when he entered the service of Alessandro Farnese as a court painter, he got closer to influential men well known in the Flanders at that time: philosophers such as Justus Lipsius, but also clergymen such as Laevinus Torrentius, who influenced both his emblem books and his pictorial production. Before devoting himself almost exclusively to writing and illustrating his emblem books, Vaenius received numerous commissions, particularly to redecorate Catholic churches that had been devastated during the iconoclasms.⁴ These religious paintings had to follow the precepts of the Council of Trent, in which the worship and invocation of angels had been reaffirmed.⁵

Like the saints, angels were not seen by Protestants as intercessors between God and men.⁶ Molanus deals with the question of their depiction in several chapters of his *Treatise on Sacred Images* of 1570,⁷ in which he stressed the importance of their presence in religious paintings.⁸ Vaenius, following the precepts of the Counter-reformation, used the angelic figure in many allegorical compositions and, as we soon shall see, even superposed the image of an angel on that of a Protestant, which was quite daring for his time.

Emblems of the Low Countries. A Book Historical Perspective. Glasgow Emblem Studies 8 (2003) 17–44; Montone T., “*Dolci ire, dolci sdegni, e dolci paci: The Role of the Collaborator in the Making of Otto Vaenius’ Amorum Emblemata* (1608)”, *ibidem* 45–61; Buschhoff A., *Die Liebesemblemata des Otto van Veen: die Amorum emblemata* (1608) *und die Amoris divini emblemata* (1615) (Bremen: 2004); Boot P., “A Mirror to the Eyes of the Mind: Metaphor in Otto van Veen’s *Amoris divini emblemata* (Antwerp, 1615)”, in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni A. (eds.), *Emblemata sacra: Rhétorique et herméneutique du discours sacré dans la littérature en images* (Turnhout: 2007) 291–304; Montone T., “*Horatius Emblematicus: genio e tecnica negli emblemi filosofici del maestro olandese Otto van Veen (Vaenius)*”, in Secchi Tarugi L. (ed), *Il Concetto di libertà nel Rinascimento* (Firenze: 2008) 589–606; Boot P., “Playing and Displaying Love: Theatricality in Otto van Veen’s *Amoris divini emblemata* (Antwerp 1615)”, *Emblematica* 16 (2008) 339–364.

⁴ Cf. Brézé N. de, “Otto van Veen on Penitence and Choice”, in Büttner N. – Heinen U. – Leuschner E. (eds.), *Die Rekonstruktion der Gesellschaft aus der Kunst: Antwerpener Malerei und Graphik in und nach den Katastrophen des späten 16. Jahrhunderts*, forthcoming.

⁵ Cf. *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*: “[...] angels, who hold a middle place between man and the Divinity [...]”, ed. J. Donovan (Baltimore: 1829) 333.

⁶ Cf. Calvin J., *Institution de la religion chrétienne* (1541), ed. O. Millet (Genève: 2008); Besançon A., *L’image interdite. Une histoire intellectuelle de l’iconoclasme* (Paris: 2000) 345.

⁷ Molanus Johannes, *De historia sanctorum imaginum et picturarum, pro vero earum usu contra abusum* (Antwerp, apud Gasparem Bellerum, 1617) II 10, II 18, II 20, II 34, III 40, III 41, IV 17.

⁸ *Ibidem* III 40.

Judging from the inscriptions in his emblem books and from the allegorical scope of some of his works, it is easy to consider Otto Vaenius as a *pictor doctus*. As for religious paintings – which particularly concern us within the framework of this paper – it is worth noting that, for some pictures, he implicitly refers to various sources, either biblical or exegetical. Very often, he bases his compositions on the interpretations that medieval commentators made of the New Testament, among which we can count Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Chrysostom. For example, in the first panel of a series of fifteen paintings dedicated to the life of the Virgin, which represents the Annunciation [Fig. 1], the traditional composition with the Virgin on one side and, on the other side, the Archangel Gabriel announcing her future pregnancy is maintained. But, unlike other representations that can be found in Northern Europe at that time, Gabriel is not alone; he is indeed followed by a cohort of angels. This little-known pattern finds in fact its origin in the writings of the Church Fathers and the Doctors of the Church, who think of these angels as the witnesses not of the Annunciation itself but of the Incarnation, invisible to the human eye. Indeed, Thomas Aquinas writes, in the part of the *Summa Theologica* that deals with the Annunciation: “The mystery of the Incarnation is the greatest of all things announced by angels to men. [...] Divine things are brought to men by means of the angels”.⁹ The same kind of remark is to be found in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who adds, in his *Celestial hierarchy*, that the angels had foreknowledge of the Incarnation.¹⁰ A closer look at the group of angels in the *Annunciation* readily reveals two of them in the doorway. The one on the right contemplates the scene, while the one on the left turns away from it and looks at the viewer in order to encourage him to contemplate the Incarnation. Thus, contrary to the Annunciations that were found in Northern paintings in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, we can see that Vaenius' painting can be read on several levels: it respects the usual pattern of the Annunciation, but can also be understood through the exegesis of the Church fathers.

With this example, it has been possible to see how Vaenius created a visual exegesis from medieval biblical commentaries. If it is possible to

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIIa, q. 30, art. 2, obj. 4; the English translation used for the quotations is: Aquinas T., *The Summa theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. the English Dominican Fathers, 3 vols. (New York, Benzinger Brothers, 1947–1948).

¹⁰ *Celestial Hierarchy*, IV.4, in Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibheid; ed. P. Rorem (London: 1987) 158.



Fig. 1. Otto Vaenius, *Annunciation*. Oil on wood, 23.5 × 32 cm. Neuburg, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen.

find many indications of this scholarly literature in all of Vaenius' paintings, his own erudition has been much more exploited in the emblems he created since 1607, where various representations of winged characters can be observed. In the *Q. Horatii flacci emblemata*,¹¹ putti can often be found, and they embody both virtuous figures and vicious ones – they double the narrative episode depicted in imitating or accenting the protagonist's action. In his next emblem book, entitled *Amorum emblemata*,¹² Vaenius represents a winged boy who is called either Cupid or putto in some studies of emblem books. In fact, Cupid is the *real* protagonist of this book, as Vaenius wrote in the poem at the beginning.¹³ And, if we strictly consider Dempsey's definitions of putti, they are characters that are not part of a

¹¹ Vaenius Othonius, *Q. Horatii Flacci Emblemata, imaginibus in aes incisis notisque illustrata studio Othonis Vaenii* (Antwerp, H. Verdussen: 1607).

¹² Idem, *Amorum emblemata, figuris aeneis incisa, studio Othonis Vaenii* (Antwerp, H. Verdussen: 1608).

¹³ Ibidem IX–XIII: 'Cupidine alla giouentu. Cupidon à la jeunesse'.

narration – they are only used as ornaments.¹⁴ In Vaenius' book, even if the images are pure products of the artist's imagination, they enact an allegorical narration conveyed by a 'being', Cupid, who has a not insignificant effect on the characters around him in various situations. Most of the time, he embodies the pleasures, and in Vaenius' book, he also symbolizes the value of eloquence when associated with Hercules.¹⁵ A few years after the publication of the *Amorum emblemata*, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia asked Vaenius to change his profane emblems into sacred ones, featuring this time Divine Love and not the Pagan Love he drew under the features of Cupid.¹⁶ Vaenius' Divine Love (*Amor divinus*) is neither a putto nor an angel, but a personification embodying God's love. Throughout the book, he guides the human soul (*Anima*), personified as a winged little girl (who appears as a celestial being as well). The *Amoris divini emblemata* are of particular interest because they are not only a visual interpretation, but the visual interpretation of a theological interpretation: the reader of such a book deals with a work of art with two degrees of signification. Indeed, many theologians have drawn on the various appearances of angels in the Bible, reinterpreting the text and adapting it – especially concerning their relation to the human being. According to Aquinas, the angel, who is above all a mediator between God and men, has to be thought of as the link that connects the material world to the spiritual.¹⁷ In other words, the angel is the middle creature between the human being, which is a physical and spiritual creature, and the creator. The angel is a purely spiritual substance, that is to say, superior to man, but inferior to God. Because of this, the angel is the link between the human world and its principle: he ensures the continuity that enables men to advance towards God.¹⁸ He also provides an ideal example, in which man can recognize himself and can follow in the next life when the human soul, separated from the body, will be in a similar condition to that of the angel. Here we find the theological theme of the guardian angel accompanying and helping man on his path.¹⁹ Man in the hereafter will not need a guardian angel

¹⁴ Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* 49.

¹⁵ Vaenius, *Amorum emblemata* 32–33 ('Virtutis radix amor'; 52–53 ('Virtute duces'); 82–83 ('Amor addocet artes').

¹⁶ Vaenius Othonius, *Amoris divini emblemata, studio et aere Othonis Vaenii concinnata* (Antwerp, M. Nutii et J. Meursii: 1615).

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* Ia, q. 112, art. 1, sol. 4.

¹⁸ See Suarez-Nani T., *Les anges et la philosophie* (Paris: 2002) 27–54.

¹⁹ On the cult of the guardian angel in the modern period, see Chorprenning J.F., "Levels of Meaning in *Philothea* and Her Guardian Angel", *International Commission for Salesian Studies Newsletter* 24 (2009) 3–7.

anymore, for he will himself be of an angelic condition.²⁰ Vaenius illustrates these considerations in his *Amoris divini emblemata*, in which *Amor divinus* can be interpreted as a guardian angel, as a guide of *Anima*, which has herself taken an angelic form, since she has been detached from all materiality. *Amor divinus*, or *Anima's* guardian angel, is in fact her spiritual alter ego. This emblem book can be considered as an object of devotion and an example of a contemplative way of life – *anima* should then be considered as a mirror of the reader's soul.²¹ Thus, according to some theologians, man, progressing through spiritual contemplation, has eaten the bread of angels, as it is said in *Psalms* 77:25. In a certain way, this psalm was illustrated in one of the engravings contained in a book attributed to Vaenius that is dedicated to the life of St. Rose of Lima.²² In the 37th plate [Fig. 2], she accomplishes a miracle: she visits a patient and manages to cure him by taking the form of an angel. The following plate [Fig. 3], which depicts her on her deathbed, is highly original. On the one hand, her face appears in the guise of Christ. On the other hand, her spirit is rising up to heaven in the form of angels, which recalls Aquinas' view on the human soul after death: 'When, he [the man] arrives at the end of life he no longer has a guardian angel; but in the kingdom he will have an angel to reign with him'.²³ Perhaps there is also a more direct reference to this psalm in an image designed by Vaenius and engraved by his brother Gijsbert van Veen [Fig. 4]. In the center of this print, one can see a woman, whose headdress covers her eyes, led by the devil. An angel coming out of the clouds is putting something in her mouth. The inscriptions above the angel help the viewer understand that she is a personification of Iniquity. The first quotation is a sentence that sums up one of the visions that can be found at the beginning of the book of Zechariah. The angel he sees in his vision shows him a basket in which a woman is seated. He tells the prophet that it is a personification of Iniquity and Wickedness, and then: '[...] he pushed her back into the basket and pushed its lead cover

²⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theologica* Ia, q. 113, art. 4, *respondeo*.

²¹ On this point, see Guiderdoni A., "La polysémie des figures dans l'emblématique sacrée", in Adams A. (ed.), *Emblems and Art History* (Glasgow: 1996) 97–114; eadem, "Les figures angéliques dans les recueils de méditation emblématiques des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles", *La parte dell'angelo 1 – Documenti di lavoro e pre-pubblicazioni* 370–372 (2008) 26–27.

²² Vaenius Othonius (attr.), [*Vie de Saint Rose de Lima OP*] (s.l., s.n.: s.d. [Antwerp? 17th century]); both known exemplars of the volume lack a title-page and, therefore, publication information. The exemplar in the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, Paris, may be found at Res. mod. B65.

²³ Aquinas, *Summa theologica* Ia, q. 113, art. 4, *respondeo*.



Fig. 2. Attributed to Otto Vaenius, engraved illustration from *Life of St. Rose of Lima*, plate 37.



Fig. 3. Attributed to Otto Vaenius, engraved illustration from *Life of St. Rose of Lima*, plate 38.



Fig. 4. Gijsbert van Veen after Otto Vaenius, *The Wedding of Evil and the Devil* (ca. 1605). Engraving, 37.3 × 23.8 cm.

down on it'.²⁴ Iniquity, who chose to act according to her own will, is definitively condemned by God. The second quotation Vaenius includes in his engraving comes from *Psalms* 107:42. At the end, it is said that men who are in the right path can see God whereas Iniquity does not and has her mouth shut: 'The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths'.²⁵ And this explains why the angel is putting something in the mouth of Iniquity and also why her eyes are covered. We can also see a reference to *Psalms* 77, where it is said that Ephraim's sons, who went into battle, refused to follow God's Law and did not believe in him anymore. Despite his help, they sinned against him and challenged him to set a table in the desert. Taken with anger, God rained down manna to feed them: 'Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat'.²⁶ If they had had faith in God, they would have received the Word, but they did not. According to Augustine, who commented on this psalm, the unbelievers are the property of demons, of rebel angels.²⁷ We may also see in this picture the angel trying to feed this unbelieving character who does not see this celestial apparition since she is guided by the devil. In this image, the composition is particularly well conceived – at the top we can find fallen angels playing music, and at the bottom, putti embodying various vices. The fallen angels are not winged. In the iconographic tradition, angels of the Apocalypse become demonic creatures during their fall and assume animal characteristics that we can find here at the top: horns, hairs, and so on. Their noisy music reflects their mood. This presence of the fallen angels in a composition made by Vaenius must be emphasized because it is the only time he mentions them in a figurative way.²⁸

²⁴ *Zechariah* 5:5–8: 'Angelus domini obstruit massa plumbea os iniquitatis'.

²⁵ 'Omnis iniquitas opplabit os suam'.

²⁶ In his commentary, Augustine writes that the bread of angels is the *Logos* of God. Referring to *John* 1:14, he adds: 'the Bread by means of the Evangelical clouds is being rained over the whole world, and, the hearts of preachers, like heavenly doors, being opened, is preached not to a murmuring and tempting synagogue, but to a Church believing and putting hope in Him. [...] [This bread] is able also to feed the feeble faith of such as tempt not, but believe', Augustine A., *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church 8–13, 6 vols. (Oxford: 1847–1857) IV 61.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ There is another reference to Lucifer and his fall in Vaenius Othonius, *Physicae et Theologicae Conclusiones, notis et figuris dispositae ac demonstratae, de primariis fidei capitibus, atque imprimis de praedestinatione, quomodo effectus illius superetur a libero arbitrio* (Orsellis, s.n.: 1621), chapter 9. On this book, see Geissmar C., "The Geometrical Order of the World: Otto van Veen's *Physicae et Theologicae Conclusiones*", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993) 168–182. Vaenius does not seem to have painted any

In his composition, Vaenius chooses to associate angels and putti, who have a purely decorative function. They are used to personify the vices that define Iniquity: usury (*usura*), rapine (*rapina*), hypocrisy (*hypocrisis*), love of power (*luxuria*), fraud (*fraus*) and simony (*simonia*). Some of these vices were very seldom depicted at that time. They are all directly related to the personification of Iniquity and symbolize the different aspects of the corruption of morals. The personification of Simony seems particularly innovative: a putto assembles riches, taking a register which is going to help the wealthiest donors to reach divine grace.²⁹ This picture had as a pendant another engraving entitled the *Marriage of Christ and the Church*, which has exactly the same composition [Fig. 5]. In the center, Christ and the Church are united by God. Christ is accompanied by virtues, while the Church is surrounded by personifications that define her: *Antiquitatis*, *Successio*, *Universitas* and *Loquela dei*. Angels playing music dominate the composition and appear at the bottom of a cloud where angelic heads and wings are barely defined. Their harmonious music (cello, lute, and so on) is opposed to the sound of drums of the fallen angels, who beat them hard. And, as in the previous engraving, putti, this time virtuous ones, decorate the bottom of the picture, as if it were a frieze. They do not embody a virtue in particular, but anonymously indicate the characters who participated in the triumph of the Church: clergymen (one can distinguish a bishop and a monk on the left, and a nun is holding a miniature church), the Evangelists (putto holding a pen on the right) and martyrs (putto holding a cross symbolically in the direction of Christ, and a feminine putto whose attributes – sword and wheel – recall instruments of torture). Thus, these 'religious' putti add meaning to the composition. They are the main protagonists' doubles and are here to create a distance between the central image and the viewer, so that the spectator can understand the different meanings of the engraving.

That is why it is possible to say that in both prints, angels attend and celebrate the union of the Devil and Iniquity and that of Christ and the Church, while putti bring additional meaning, even if they are just ornaments. Vaenius, in creating two opposite engravings, goes back to the eschatological vision presented in Augustine's *City of God*: the angels are

figurative picture of Lucifer, even though he can be found in the allegorical reading of an emblem where the sphere of Lucifer is opposed to that of God (Vaenius, *Amoris divini emblemata*, 52 ["Conscientia testis"]).

²⁹ We can notice that all the vices appearing in this picture were studied in details by Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* IIa IIae, q. 100–120.



Fig. 5. Gijsbert van Veen after Otto Vaenius, *The Wedding of Christ and the Church* (ca. 1605). Engraving, 37.3 × 23.8 cm.

the citizens of the heavenly city and they are opposed to the demons, considered as the citizens of the city of the devil and as personifications of the gods of paganism.³⁰ This opposition, which echoes the duality of light and darkness, decisively determines the doctrine of predestination, in that the elected ones are required to serve in the city of God, the place that had been home of the rebellious angels.³¹

The iconographies of the marriage of the Devil and Iniquity, as well as the marriage of the Church and Christ, were not often depicted by artists. However, Vaenius gave a second version of the marriage of the Church in a cycle of six paintings that illustrates the triumph of the Catholic Church.³² This specific iconography comes from biblical exegesis. Indeed, in a homily of the second century, called *Second Epistle of Clement*, the commentary on the passage in *Genesis*, 'God created man, male and female he created them' (1:27), says: 'The male is Christ, the female the church. [...] the church has not come into being just now, but has existed from the beginning'.³³ This idea has been recurrent since then: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Ambrose all wrote about it. And Saint Bernard extended it when he wrote: 'According to predestination, there was no time when the Church was not with God. [...] She has never not been the beloved'.³⁴

This cycle created by Vaenius is particularly interesting inasmuch as angels are depicted in several paintings; they are presented with inscriptions that must be analyzed precisely. They appear from the third panel, from the moment when the Church is established and personified as a young woman who recalls the Virgin. The six paintings of the cycle have a common feature: the composition is made with a triumphal chariot drawn by characters or personifications who played a significant role in the formation of the Catholic Church. Seated on the chariot are the personifications embodying the Church and, behind, various heresies are painted – heresies that the medieval and modern theologians have

³⁰ Augustine A., *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: 1998) 466–468 (XI.13) and 493–495 (XI.33).

³¹ Ibidem 504–507 (XII.6).

³² On this cycle, cf. Vogl A., *Der Bilderzyklus 'Der Triumph der Kirche' von Otto van Veen* (Munich: 1987); Brézé N. de, "La figure d'Ecclesia dans le cycle du *Triomphe de l'Eglise catholique*", in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni A. – Nativel C. – Weemans M. (eds.), *Figure, figurabilité*, forthcoming.

³³ *Second Epistle of Clement*, in Ehrman, B.D. (ed.), *The Apostolic Fathers. I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache* (Cambridge, MA: 2003) 187 (14.26).

³⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* (Rome: 1958) 78.3.

tried to overcome in their writings. In the sky, angels are waving banners on which inscriptions concerning the Church can be read, most of them from the New Testament. The angels are the vectors of the Scriptures and they play a transitional part between the message conveyed in the image and the viewer, who may understand the allegorical meaning of this cycle thanks to these inscriptions. But, beyond mere quotations, these words have a much more concrete meaning when they are read in the light of the medieval exegetes. The final painting is the most allegorical one and the quotations may be read with different levels of interpretation [Fig. 6].

The personification of Ecclesia, who, until this panel, has always been presented on a chariot, is, in this last painting, in front of it. She leads it and becomes a militant figure. She gives up her seat on the chariot to several figures – personifications of Charity and Faith – but also to two biblical passages that respond to each other – the crucified Christ and the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, which in the Old Testament prefigures the sacrifice of Christ. According to Ambrose of Milan and John Chrysostom, the Church was born precisely when Christ died on the cross – which here seems to justify Vaenius' choice of composition.³⁵ Faithful to the Gospel, Vaenius painted the water and the blood gushing from Christ's side, elements usually regarded as the foundation of two essential sacraments of the Church: Baptism and Eucharist. The idea of Eucharist is redundant in this painting, since it is also symbolized by the chalice that Charity holds toward Christ, which is a direct reference to the consecration of the wine and the distribution of bread.

Personifications and characters that have been seen through the five previous paintings are to be found: *Ratio humana divinam revelationem agnoscens* leads the chariot holding the bridle of the first horse. She is with Christ and Ecclesia, who holds a sign with the words *Epistola* and *Sermo*. The personification of Faith sits on the chariot, and some heretics follow in the back: we can recognize Ethnicus, Judaeus, Arrius and the personification of Islam. Explanatory banners punctuate the course of the chariot and give a clear meaning to the various groups of characters. Above *Ratio humana*, an inscription is to be read: 'That was the true Light which

³⁵ According to Ambrose, Eve was formed from Adam's side as he slept, so Christ's Bride, the Church, was born from his pierced side when he was upon the Cross; see *Sancti Ambrosii mediolanensis Opera, Pars IV, Exposition Evangelii Secundum Lucam Fragmenta in Esaiam* (Turnhout: 1957) 69–70 (2.85–89). In his *Baptismal Instructions*, Chrysostom writes: '[...] the symbols of baptism and the mysteries come from the side of Christ. It is from his side, therefore, that Christ formed his church, just as he formed Eve from the side of Adam' (John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions* [Westminster, MD: 1963], 3.17).



Fig. 6. Otto Vaenius, *The Triumph of the Catholic Church*. Oil on wood, 75 × 106 cm. Bamberg, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie in der Neuen Residenz.

lights every man that comes into the world',³⁶ a verse from the Gospel according to John (1:9). This quotation can be understood more easily when we read the comments of this sentence by Augustine:³⁷ 'Because man enlightened is called light, but the true Light is that which lightens'.³⁸ Before being enlightened, men were nothing but darkness, writes Augustine. When Christ came on earth, just a few saw him – Augustine tells us

³⁶ 'Inluminat omnem hominem venientem in mundum'.

³⁷ In his cycle, Vaenius portrayed numerous commentators of the Bible, which suggests that the allegorical meaning of this series can be found in their commentaries. These texts were accessible to Vaenius, who was well-versed in Latin and had many religious humanist friends; among them we have already mentioned Laevinus Torrentius, whose library was one of the most well stocked of the Southern Netherlands; see Landtsheer J. de, "The Library of Bishop Laevinus Torrentius: A Mirror of *Otium* and *Negotium*", in Smet R. de (ed.), *Les Humanistes et leur bibliothèque* (Leuven: 2002) 175–191. Furthermore, biblical commentaries such as Thomas Aquinas' *Catena aurea* were well spread in Vaenius' circle. The commentary of Aquinas holds one's attention in Vaenius' case since he illustrated a *Vita* dedicated to him in 1610. All the authors quoted here to explain the allegorical meaning of the painting are to be found in both Aquinas' *Catena aurea* and Vaenius' cycle.

³⁸ Augustine, *Treatises on the Gospel of John*, 2.6; quoted by Aquinas T., *Catena aurea*, 8 vols. (Oxford: 1845) IV, part 1, 26.

that ignoramus, the blind and the wicked cannot see him.³⁹ Vaenius depicted this argument in his painting: indeed, the heretics, behind the chariot, cannot see Christ who leads it and who symbolically is turned toward the viewer. This idea of heresy is suggested in the Gospel of John: 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not' (*John* 1:10). Chrysostom's comment of this verse gives particular emphasis to the heretics:

He only enlightens every man, so far as pertains to Him. If men shut their eyes, and will not receive the rays of this light, their darkness arises not from the fault of the light, but from their own wickedness, inasmuch as they voluntarily deprive themselves of the gift of grace. For grace is poured out upon all; and they, who will not enjoy the gift, may impute it to their own blindness.⁴⁰

Above Christ, we can read: 'Search the Scriptures'.⁴¹ To understand this fragment, it is necessary to go back to the passage of the Gospel of John that comes just before. From chapter 5, verse 19, Jesus begins to say that he cannot do anything without the support of God. This addresses the Jews in a roundabout way,⁴² since they did not recognize the word of God and have stuck to a mechanical reading of the Scriptures, 'they should be saved by the mere reading of them, without faith'.⁴³ According to Chrysostom, by not believing in Christ, the Jews have refused to come to him.⁴⁴ And, according to the Venerable Bede, the verb 'to come' means in this context 'to believe'.⁴⁵ Indeed, when he says 'Come to him and be lightened' (*Psalms* 33:6), Jesus added 'that you might have life'. If it is the soul indeed that commits sin, then they died of heart and mind. He therefore promised them eternal bliss. The angel accompanying Ecclesia holds a sign bearing the inscription: 'In vain he calls God the Father, who does not recognize the Church as mother'.⁴⁶ Just as the Jews do not recognize Christ, he does not recognize the Church. Another angel is brandishing

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, 8.2; quoted by Aquinas, *Catena aurea* IV, part 1, 27.

⁴¹ 'Scrutamini scripturas'; *John* 5:39: 'Search the Scriptures [for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me]'.
⁴² *John* 5:23: 'That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which has sent him'.

⁴³ *John* 1:10.

⁴⁴ Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, 41.1; quoted by Aquinas, *Catena aurea* IV, part 1, 204.
⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ 'Frustra appellat Deum patrem, qui non agnoscit Ecclesiam matrem(m)'.

a banner above the chariot on which we can read: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son'.⁴⁷ This sentence was an answer Christ gave to Nicodemus. After he said to him, in a roundabout way, that he would die,⁴⁸ he revealed that his own death is the result of eternal life. According to Chrysostom, man cannot be surprised that Christ was lifted on the cross: 'for so it seems good to the Father, who has so loved you, that He has given His Son to suffer for ungrateful and careless servants'.⁴⁹ The presence of Charity on the chariot can be understood thanks to the commentary of St. Hilary, who explained this verse as follows: 'here is the test of love and charity, that God sent His own and only begotten Son to save the world'.⁵⁰ The rest of Christ's speech, in the Gospel of John, adds some meaning to understand Vaenius' painting. Indeed, it is said that those who believe in Christ will not be tried, while those who do not believe in him have already been tried (5:18). Thus, those who do not believe are judged and that is why they are at the back of the chariot in the painting. The heretics can all be found at the back of the chariot, but the banner above them has a positive connotation, referring to forgiveness: 'Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'.⁵¹ According to Gregory the Great, 'when all our Lord's sacred discourses are full of His commandments, why does He give this special commandment respecting love, if it is not that every commandment teaches love, and all precepts are one?'⁵² He also adds:

The highest, the only proof of love, is to love our adversary; as did the Truth Himself, who while He suffered on the cross, showed His love for His persecutors. [...] Our Lord came to die for His enemies, but He says that He is going to lay down His life for His friends, to show us that by loving, we are able to gain over our enemies, so that they who persecute us are by anticipation our friends.⁵³

⁴⁷ 'Sic dilexit enim ut Deus mundum filium suum unigenitum Daret'; *John* 3:16: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life]'.

⁴⁸ *John* 3:12: 'How shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?'

⁴⁹ Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, 27.2; quoted by Aquinas, *Catena aurea* IV, part 1, 116.

⁵⁰ Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 6.40; quoted by Aquinas, *Catena aurea* IV, part 1, 116.

⁵¹ 'Maiorem hac dilectionem habet animam suam quis ut ponat Amicis pro am'; *John* 15:13.

⁵² Gregory the Great, *Homily* 27; quoted by Aquinas, *Catena aurea* IV, part 2, 484.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

In this cycle, and more particularly in the last painting, Vaenius used a lot of references from the Bible and from medieval exegetes. As in his emblem books, it seems that he collected various quotations and commentaries (most probably from some anthologies such as Aquinas' *Catena aurea*) to imagine such allegorical paintings. We could even speak of this painting as an example of an 'allegory of exegesis'⁵⁴ because of its intricate conception: the part played by the personifications that evolve in the cycle; the importance of the quotations held by the angels and their positions in the picture; the interaction between personifications and historical characters (from antiquity to sixteenth century).

Many angels and putti are to be found in Vaenius' paintings, designs and emblems. In the images analyzed in this paper, their positions and actions can always be justified by reference to exegetical writings, which leads us to see how innovative Vaenius could be in his compositions. Perhaps his most original one is that of the *Triumph of the Catholic Church*, intended for humanist viewers, who were likely to meditate on the Catholic Faith. To these erudite eyes, it was clear that angels act as messengers and enlighten the meaning of all the paintings. They are here literally God's messengers: bearing quotations from the Bible, they act as announcing angels. In the paintings, they are depicted as bridges between an inaccessible and invisible God, and the viewers whose destinies are ephemeral.

⁵⁴ I thank Walter Melion for suggesting this phrase to me.

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EXEGETICAL IMMERSION:
THE FESTIVITIES ON THE OCCASION
OF FRANCIS DE SALES'S CANONISATION (1665–1667)¹

Agnès Guiderdoni

In his 1662 *Art des emblèmes*, the French Jesuit Claude-François Ménestrier, a master in *ars symbolica*, explains what religious emblems are:

The Sacred [emblems] are those that under borrowed or symbolic figures contain the maxims of Religion and its mysteries. As are all the figures of the Prophecies and the Apocalypse, the stories of the Old Testament, which are the figures of the New, and the ceremonies of the ancient Law, when they are turned to good use for the instruction of the Christian maxims. Holy Scripture is at the origin of these emblems, and however ingenious the pagan philosophy seems, it has never yielded symbols as noble as those of the Holy Scriptures [...].²

According to Ménestrier, the Bible is not only a reservoir for emblems, but more importantly to us, its exegetical structure is in essence emblematic. In other words, the figurative model of emblematics, its signifying process, is given by the structural principles of biblical exegesis. As a consequence, the emblem is turned into a key hermeneutical device constitutive of the process of visual exegesis. Moreover, the emblem entertains a transcendent relationship with the biblical text, as Ménestrier states further on:

We represent in emblems divine perfection without idolatry and if we make images, it is not in order to worship them but, through enigmatic and symbolic figures, to learn to know God in his creatures without ascribing to him the defects that they have.³

¹ I would like to thank James Clifton for his help in the final revision of this paper.

² Ménestrier Claude-François, *L'Art des Emblèmes* (Lyon, Benoist Coral: 1662) 34: 'Les Sacrez sont ceux qui sous des figures empruntées, ou symboliques contiennent les maximes de la religion, & les mysteres. Comme sont toutes les figures des Propheties, & de l'Apocalypse; les histoires du vieil Testament, qui sont les figures du Nouveau, & les ceremonies de l'ancienne Loy, quand on les fait servir à l'instruction des maximes Chrétiennes. L'Ecriture sainte est l'original de ces Emblemes, & quelque ingénieuse que semble la Philosophie Payenne, elle n'a jamais eu des symboles si augustes, que ceux des saintes lettres [...]'.
³ Ménestrier, *L'Art des Emblèmes* 61: 'Nous representons en Emblemes les perfections divines sans Idolatrie & si nous faisons des Images ce n'est pas pour les adorer, mais pour

The argument is of course reminiscent of the polemics against iconoclasm, and implicitly elicits the notion of an original or model, that is, the notion of a *prototype*. It is an established fact that one of the main theological arguments marshaled in defence of images consists in referring worship to the prototype – the referent of the image – thanks to the *transitus* of the beholder's gaze toward this referent. So, if emblems grant us access to God in the same way as sacred figures do, and if the Holy Scripture is their model, then emblems and sacred text are related to each other in both a relation of imitation and one of interpretation, or rather, in a relation of imitation through interpretation. But this also and above all implies a transcendent relation between the two, the reading of the emblem being a transitive reading toward the model discourse of its referent, that is, of the sacred text, exactly as the prototype is in a relation to the image that represents it. This transfer of scriptural figures into an emblematic context, onto which one superimposes the figurative rules of the emblems, institutes this transcendent relation at the level of the figures of speech, given the fact that a metaphor (sometimes a metonymy) is always at the heart of any emblem.⁴ This shift is clearly achieved by another Jesuit, Maximilien Van der Sandt (or Sandaeus), who elaborated a full-fledged theory of biblical emblematics in his *Theologia symbolica* in 1626.⁵ Sandaeus developed a long argument from which one can deduce that the symbolism of things (*allegoria in factis*) boils down to the symbolism of words (*allegoria in verbis*), and more specifically to a *modus loquendi*, whose aim is to decipher the mystery of God – in accordance with the general definition of symbolics – but with the consequence that everything has become *allegoria in verbis*.⁶ Pushing this rhetorical line to

apprendre par des figures Enigmatiques & symboliques à connoître Dieu dans les creatures sans luy donner les défauts qu'elles ont'.

⁴ See Guiderdoni A., "Figures de l'âme pèlerine : La méditation emblématique aux xvi^e et xvii^e siècles", in Papasogli B. et Stock B. (eds), *La Meditazione in età moderna. Rivista di Storia e Letteratura religiosa* 41 (2005) 695–723.

⁵ Van der Sandt Maximilien (or Sandaeus), *Theologia symbolica ex omni antiquitate sacra, ac profana in Artis formam redacta, Oratoribus, Poëtis, & universe Philologis, ad omnem commoditatem amoenae eruditionis concinnata* (Mainz, Johann Theobald Schönewetter: 1626).

⁶ For expositions of this book and its arguments, see Spica A.E., *Symbolique humaniste et emblématique. L'évolution et les genres* (Paris: 1996); Vuilleumier-Laurens Fl., *La raison des figures symboliques à la Renaissance et à l'âge classique. Études sur les fondements philosophiques, théologiques et rhétoriques de l'image* (Genève: 2000); Guiderdoni A., *Emblématique et spiritualité, 1540–1740* (Paris: forthcoming). On the shift between the *allegoria in factis* and the *allegoria in verbis* in Sandaeus, see also Certeau M. de, *La Fable mystique. xvi^e–xvii^e siècles* (Paris: 1982) 103–104.

the extreme, Sandaeus defines six genres of symbolic theology: parabolic, proverbial, enigmatic, emblematic, 'fabled' (from the *Fabula*), and hieroglyphic.⁷ Thus, emblematics becomes a theological discourse, providing a model of reading the mystery of God. Finally, after expounding the many definitions of the emblem and its various parts, he explains to what extent the Holy Scripture contains the most ingenious emblems and what kind of biblical text can provide emblems. For Sandaeus, the emblematic quality of the Bible depends in fact on the quality of the reading itself, since it is up to the excellence of the theologian, and not to predetermined motifs, to be or not to be emblematic. In this view, the Bible has become a flexible matter that serves not only as raw material for the emblem but even that of which the emblem reveals the sense. Theological emblematics is a true hermeneutics, which is dynamically based on the ability of the reader to isolate and identify the 'ingenuity and theological subtlety' of the biblical figure.

This 'bricolage' that Sandaeus applies to the principles of biblical exegesis, and which was also conceived in Ménestrier's works, made possible the use of emblematically processed biblical text in numerous rhetorical contexts – virtually everywhere a need of spiritual, pastoral, apologetic, didactic, or political efficacy was felt. Therefore, I shall not focus so much on this process than on its import and efficacy. To that end, I shall take the examples of several French festivities designed on the occasion of the beatification and canonisation of Francis de Sales, respectively in 1662 and 1666, where the hagiographical nature of the events requires a remarkable concentration of persuasive means and striking effects – thus, a maximised use of rhetorically adapted visual exegesis.

Ménestrier implemented his idea on emblems and the Bible in a chapel in Grenoble (France), Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, which was the church of the Visitation convent, now turned into a museum. The chapel was decorated in 1666 on the occasion of the canonisation of Francis de Sales. It then served a hagiographical project. Following the brief of canonisation promulgated in April 1665 by Alexander VII, the French Visitandines started to organise throughout France magnificent festivities in order to celebrate such an important event: the acknowledgement by Rome

⁷ Sandaeus, "Idea totius disciplinae", in *Theologia symbolica* 717: "Theologiae symbolicae species sunt I. Parabolica. II. Parcmialis. Proverbialis. Adagialis III. Ænigmatica. IV. Emblematica. V. Fabularis. VI. Hieroglyphica'.

of their founder as a saint. This canonisation had great political, confessional, and devotional significance, and to celebrate it was a matter of bringing these issues to the fore, emphasizing the stature of Francis de Sales. After the festivities in Rome, the first city to celebrate the event was of course Annecy, where the first convent had been established, and where the body of the Saint, as well as that of Madame de Chantal, co-founder of the order, were buried. The canonisation sanctified Francis's body and turned it into a highly precious relic. The celebrations in Annecy set the tone and opened a festive era, which durably shaped Salesian hagiographical discourse. Annecy was followed, in only a few months, by Grenoble (with two different feasts, one in each of the two Visitation convents), then Moulins, Paris, Bourges, Mâcon, Lyon, Orléans, Clermont-Ferrand, etc.⁸ In each of these festivities, as the surviving account of them attests, emblematics played a major role in the decoration and the *mise en scène*, the displaying and building or reproduction of the hagiographical discourse. The festivities organised in Grenoble were remarkable in many respects. First, the Visitandines in Grenoble opted for a durable decoration of their chapel rather than only ephemeral devices. The result is that this decoration still exists, unlike the other celebrations of the canonisation. Second, the iconographic programme was designed by none other than Ménestrier, also a master in the art of spectacle. Ménestrier had also organised the celebrations in Annecy a few months before those in Grenoble. Third, we still have the two accounts that he wrote, the one being the description and interpretation of the iconographic decoration – somehow the programme that the painter Toussaint Largeot realised – and the other, the description of what happened during the several days that the festivities lasted – the processions, the sermons, the fireworks, the ephemeral devices, and also the decoration of the chapel – but from the point of view of the spectator, since the account is addressed to somebody who had not been able to attend the ceremonies, and is therefore intended for any person in this position.

⁸ The accounts of these celebrations can be found either in manuscript or printed form in various places, mainly the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, the archives of the Annecy monastery, the archive of the town of Annecy, the Bibliothèque municipale in Lyon, etc. The inventory and study of these accounts is a work in progress, being carried out by Marie-Elisabeth Henneau (Université de Liège) and myself.

The overall theme of the decor is the great work of Grace in Francis de Sales's life, then in his direction of souls, and finally, in the establishment of the order of the Visitation.⁹ Each of these aspects is present in the chapel in a symbolic and emblematic form, and is at the heart of a dense exegetical network, both visual and textual [Fig. 1].¹⁰ Thus, each of the three achievements of the work of Grace, as regards Francis de Sales, not only belongs to contemporary history, but also corresponds to the great works of Grace in general: first the life of the Saint is 'an imitation of the life of J[esus] C[hrist]'; second, the holy Church instituted by the son of God parallels the foundation and growth of the order of the Visitation, 'daughter of the saint's heart in the way that the Church is the daughter of Jesus Christ's heart'; and third, the guiding of righteous men as well as their sanctification are the third work of Grace and correspond to the saint's actions 'as the director of the souls'. The exegetical profile of the chapel is clearly sketched in this apparently typological *mise en scène*, through which Francis de Sales is celebrated as a model man (his life), as the founder of an order, and as a bishop.

Each of these facets has a specific mode of expression, which Ménestrier puts under the same category of 'symbols and emblems', to be visually expressed in the decor. The life of the Saint is represented in four different ways:

Pour exprimer toutes ces merveilles, on a choisi divers Symboles & divers Emblemes; la vie du Saint est représentée de quatre manieres, pour la rendre plus agreable par cette varieté. Des Camayeux de cirage rehaussez d'or, en font voir les principaux evenemens: d'autres sont exprimez en devises, des Vases de diverses sortes expriment ses talens & ses qualitez incomparables, & ses vertus sont représentées sous les Images Iconologiques, d'autant de filles, qui ont des Symboles qui servent à les distinguer & à les faire reconnoistre par ces marques ingenieuses que les sçavans leur ont données.¹¹

This decor comprises monochromes [Fig. 2], that are narrative scenes of his life, which are actually relegated to the margin of the main programme,

⁹ Ménestrier Claude-François, *Description de l'appareil dressé pour la ceremonie de l'octave de S. François de Sales. A l'occasion de la Solemnité de sa Canonisation, celebrée dans l'Eglise du premier Monastere de la Visitation Sainte Marie de Grenoble, qui est le quatriesme de l'Institut: depuis les premieres Vespres du 8. Septembre, jusques apres les dernieres du 17. du mesme mois [1666]* (Grenoble, Robert Philippes: 1666) 24–25.

¹⁰ The chapel is described in detail, with several plans of the decoration, in Sabatier G., "Du dessein au décor. Les peintures de Sainte-Marie-d'en-haut à Grenoble", in idem (ed.), *Claude-François Ménestrier. Les jésuites et le monde des images* (Grenoble: 2009) 289–320.

¹¹ Ménestrier, *Description de l'appareil* 26.



Fig. 1. Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.



Fig. 2. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.

since they appear only on the vaults of the south chapel grafted onto the nave; then *impresre* to represent also some of the most significant events of his life [Fig. 3]; vases [Fig. 4] in order to express his talents and incomparable qualities; and iconological figures [Fig. 5] to embody his virtues. These are all emblematic and symbolic representations scattered throughout the ceiling of the nave and the walls of the chapel. Thus the saint is also present on the vaults of the nave, which are decorated by the largest iconographic programme of the chapel, the institution of the order symbolised by the life of the Virgin, of which the congregation is a copy, as Ménestrier states (26). It consists of twelve medallions, each occupying a 'voutain', from the apparition of the angel to Zachariah at the West [Fig. 6] up to the death of Joseph at the East above the altar. Each scene becomes an emblem of 'the birth, the progression, and the spirit of the Institute'.¹² For example, the presentation of the Virgin in the Temple [Fig. 7] signifies that God takes possession of Madame de Chantal's heart, while the Annunciation [Fig. 8] becomes the allegory of Francis de Sales announcing to Madame de Chantal God's will. Selecting scenes and motifs from the biblical text as emblems, and more in particular from the New Testament, Ménestrier does two things at the same time: first, he institutes a typological correspondence between the life of the order and the life of the Virgin (though in doing this, he does not presume to place the life of Francis de Sales in an eschatological perspective, which is to say that he does not construe the life of Francis as the fulfillment of the biblical text recounting the life of the Virgin); and second, he treats the biblical text as a reservoir of tropes, or in his own words, 'enigmatic images'. But how to make sure that these enigmatic images will be understood as enigmatic? The Jesuit expressed his concern about this issue in his *Philosophie des images énigmatiques*:

[I]f I see a painting of Moses in his basket on the river, of Job lying on a dunghill, of the Virgin holding the child Jesus, of the Transfiguration, [...], how can I recognise that it is an enigma, since there is nothing of the enigmatic in it [...]?¹³

¹² 'Ménestrier, *Description de l'appareil* 25: 'la naissance, [du] progres & [de] l'esprit de l'Institut, [...] exprimez par la vie de N.D. dont cette Congregation est une copie, comme elle porte le nom de sa Visitation'.

¹³ Ménestrier Claude-François, *La Philosophie des images énigmatiques* (Lyon, Hilaire Baritel: 1694), 160.



Fig. 3. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.



Fig. 4. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.



Fig. 5. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.



Fig. 6. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.



Fig. 7. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.



Fig. 8. Toussaint Largeot, Chapelle Sainte-Marie-d'En-Haut, Grenoble (1666), detail. Fresco. Collection et copyright Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.

Exegesis should somehow be brought about and does not properly belong to the selected biblical scenes. In this instance, it is induced by the many symbols and allegories, emblems and *imprese* accompanied by inscriptions that surround the images, and which serve also to illustrate the third facet of Francis's sanctity, the guiding of souls. The whole constitutes a sophisticated ornamental framing to the narrative scenes, which are themselves treated as *imprese* and emblems, as we have seen, both in their forms and the way they are conceived by Ménestrier, and which interact with the scenes they surround. In other but similar instances, this kind of ornamental framing plays the role of a visual trope, or conversely, transforms the central scene into a trope. At any rate, it breaks through what could be tentatively called the 'face value' or literal meaning of the image, and suggests a figurative meaning. Does this happen in this chapel? Or to phrase it more precisely: where exactly does the interaction take place between the emblematic framing and the narrative medallion, and to what extent does it take place?

Looking at the decor, one is right to question its actual intelligibility. It is all blended into a rather monochromatic hue, which unifies the perception of the different elements and blurs their borders, making the identification of individual motifs difficult. Biblical narrative scenes, emblems, symbols, iconological figures are all conjoined in an almost immediate and total apprehension of the whole chapel, given that it is possible to contemplate the complete programme from the centre of the chapel. Following a dialectical move, all the works of Grace are closely linked to one another: the life of Christ viewed through the life of the Virgin, the Holy Church represented by the order of the Visitation, and sanctity embodied by Francis de Sales. Through a sophisticated play with actual mirrors, the life of the Virgin becomes a model for the lives of the Visitandines, who are themselves an image of their saintly founder, himself a faithful imitator of Christ and his Mother. The whole system constitutes a kind of *millefeuille*, a layered visual device, at the heart of which one can feel the tension between exegesis, called up by the numerous biblical, symbolic, and emblematic representations, and immersion, or perhaps absorption, provoked by their overwhelming multiplicity and their inclusion within a proliferating and signifying ornamental framing.

This comprehensive view of the frescoes is finally placed under the sign of mystery, both theological (the mystery of God) and rhetorical (symbolic and enigmatic images) since both in Ménestrier's description and in the experience of the spectator, the visual perspective leads to a double vanishing point, so as to suggest a *re-viewing* the chapel and thus revised

reading of it. This double vanishing point consists of the Holy Sacrament, and, behind it, a silver bust of Francis de Sales, placed on a large mirror and containing a piece of his liver. The Holy Sacrament is, as the Jesuit says, 'the soul of the festivity' but it is more importantly the soul of the images which are, so to speak, the body of the festivity, converting the chapel into a kind of reliquary:

Jesus Christ, hidden under the veils of the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is the soul of this Feast. Thus he is in this state the great work of Grace, from which this Sacrament drew its name. He is in fact the Treasure of the Church, and the main model for the direction of souls. And we see there, with the eyes of Faith, in their origin and in their principle, the three works of Grace, which are the originals of the design that we have conceived.¹⁴

The Holy Sacrament is ultimately the soul of the bust, as it is said that the eyes, the heart, and the mouth of Francis's bust receive the rays of the Holy Sacrament, which are compared to those of the sun, and ultimately reflects these rays back onto everybody:

Behind this sun, there is a six-foot tall mirror, on which is placed a silver bust of the saint, but with such art that his eyes, his heart and his mouth receive some imprints of light from this sun, and reflect them back onto everybody, like these luminous clouds on which the sun spreads its rays and represents its [own] image.¹⁵

An equivalence between Francis de Sales and Christ is suggested both in the text and in the actual device as described by Ménestrier. From this point of view, it is symptomatic that the whole description written by Ménestrier is placed under the general title 'François de Sales, le grand ouvrage de la Grace, 1. dans sa vie, etc.' In other words, Ménestrier conceived the whole chapel as a projection of the saint himself, as a diffracted and complete portrait, comprising the various features that make him a saint. Therefore the life of Francis is turned into the *historia*, in relation to

¹⁴ Ménestrier, *Description de l'appareil* 27: 'Jesus-Christ caché sous les voiles du tres-Auguste Sacrement de l'Eucharistie est l'ame de cette Feste, aussi est-il en cet estat le grand ouvrage de la Grace, dont ce Sacrement a tire son nom. Il en a fait le Tresor de l'Eglise, & le principal modele de la direction des ames, & nous y voyons des yeux de la Foy, dans leur source & dans leur principe, ces trois ouvrages de la Grace, qui sont les originaux du dessein que nous avons pris'.

¹⁵ Ibidem: 'Derrière ce Soleil est placé un grand miroir de six pieds de haut, sur lequel est un Buste d'argent du Saint, mais avec tant d'artifice, que ses yeux, son cœur et sa bouche, reçoivent des impressions de lumière de ce Soleil, et les réfléchissent sur tout le monde, comme ses nuées lumineuses, où le Soleil estale quelquefois la pompe de ses rayons & represente son image'.

which Ménestrier selects the figures, *figurae*, in the same way that he, and Sandaeus before him, suggested one do with the Bible. Francis de Sales's life is thus subjected to a plain exegesis, as if it has somehow superseded the biblical text: his life must be interpreted in the light of sacred history and is presented at the same time as the mirror image of (or at least part of) this sacred history, its point of convergence, where all the gazes meet and receive in return a spiritual gaze (eyes, heart, mouth), that allows scriptural history to be assessed retrospectively, to be re-read. In a clear exegetical process, past, present, and eternity are conjoined in the same *locus*. The systematic inclusion in the *mise en scène* of the ceremony and the decoration, inside and outside the chapel, of emblematic characters (mainly the nuns), in the form of portraits associated with a symbolic attribute, reinforces this conjunction. This is the case for example with the central painting of the triumphal arch that was placed at the foot of the mountain where the convent was (and still is): around the painting, several nuns portrayed in medallions are eulogised by Ménestrier.¹⁶

Visual exegesis, but one should perhaps say, perceptive and global exegesis, may well be there, in the encompassing apprehension of the space, rather than in the close reading of each motif, and it pertains to the function of this decor and to the general organisation of the celebration, made on the occasion of the canonisation: the event was intended to be memorable rather than learned (even though it is highly learned); to impress and move rather than teach, or to teach by moving. At this point, one needs to take into account the usual patterns of these kinds of ceremonies, since the chapel is only one part of a large-scale festive system, which lasted several days, even weeks, and comprised several recurrent elements, such as processions organised by the city and the various orders present in the city, ephemeral decorations of this and other churches, but also ephemeral devices scattered throughout the city (triumphal arches, chariots, altars, gardens, etc.), fireworks and the 'machines' that usually supported them, sermons, vigils, and masses. Moreover, emblematics served to deliver the many messages that were promulgated on this occasion, reconfiguring the saint's life and emphasizing his living sanctity – his '*legenda*', in a way, how 'he' should be read – and thereby sketching a canonical portrait that would pass on to posterity and, more importantly, that would fix his

¹⁶ Ibidem 5: '[plusieurs visitandines] y ont laissé des exemples de Vertus, dont la mémoire dure encore': namely, Sœur Marie Angélique de Montaynard, sœur Anne-Elizabeth de Villars, sœur Marie Angélique de Prunier, Mère Anne-Catherine de Sautereau.

distinctive moral features. The variety of media that are used in such festivities makes it necessary to consider the form under which they have reached us, that is, as images and texts (accounts, reports) that are merely representations of representations. They should be reinserted within the larger representational network that sustained them and of which they were a part. For beatification and canonisation festivities, this network was the representation of the saint's life, his achievements and works, as well as the imaginary of the saint that the network both projects and builds. Indeed, as one of Francis de Sales's earlier biographers, Nicolas Talon, recalled in 1641 – even before the beatification:

His spirit has truly been the portrait of a spiritual man, and his life, the painting of his virtues. But the divine Providence having taken him from this world and from the earth, I find nonetheless that, after his beatified death, he has left as a monument of his spirit and his sanctity, some living relics in his daughters of the Visitation, some speaking relics in his writings, and some inanimate relics that are, at his tomb and in his ashes, a miraculous source of life and immortality.¹⁷

The festivities are meant to stage this completeness and completion, in order to proclaim and spread it. They appear then as persuasive 'machines' that instrumentalized various media, making them seem as striking as possible. Thus, the celebrations in Grenoble followed a clear, systematic, or rather, systemic pattern, consisting of the usual elements and events of the feast – processions, triumphal arches, fireworks, sermons, ephemeral constructions – throughout the city of Grenoble, the whole converging towards the Visitation and its chapel, and in the chapel towards the altar and the bust of the Saint, as we have seen.

However, the systemic organisation of the celebrations such as the one deployed in Grenoble, is only one element in the persuasion strategy, or rather, the visible and legible figure of a comprehensive persuasive discourse. I would like to unfold now a subtler and deeper part of the *mise en scène*, that is, its figural efficacious power, which could not be properly understood by the spectators – through an exegetical network of texts and images – but which was perceived by their senses through a specific staging of effects. Reading other accounts of Francis de Sales's beatification

¹⁷ Sales François de, *Les œuvres du bien-heureux François de Sales, évesque et prince de Geneve (...) ou est adioustee la vie de ce parfait prelat, composée nouvellement par le P. Nicolas Talon, Tome second: contenant ses sermons, plusieurs fragments & epistres nouvelles. Avec un Traitté de la conduite spirituelle par le P.N. Caussin* (Paris: chez Arnould Cottinet, Jean Roger et Thomas Lozet, 1641) n.p.

and canonisation festivities, one cannot help noticing the importance of light, brightness, and fire. It was certainly a feature common to all the festivities and celebrations, that they included an abundance of fireworks and devices that enhanced the luminosity and the brightness of the spectacle's space. I would nonetheless single out this aspect of the Francis de Sales celebrations and argue that it was more than a topos and a common device. First, it was highly elaborated, mainly for the celebrations in Annecy and Grenoble; and second, it can be linked, indeed identified, with a dominant quality of both Salesian spirituality and imagery, which is traceable to some emblematic representations of his life. Together with the thematic development of light, brightness, fire, and lightning, the descriptions also place emphasis on the smoke, clouds, and vapours that enveloped all the events, adding to the awesome spectacle. But beyond the usual sense of spectacle that these devices enhance, the way in which it is elaborated in the descriptions points to another dimension of the persuasive rhetoric. Placed under the signs of sun, fire, and clouds, but also under the signs of sounds (and not 'music') – all elements that propagate through very specific contact, which can be described as both sensitive and spiritual – what happens during these celebrations can be understood in terms of propagation and contagion, and maybe even magnetization. In the epistemology of the time, light and sound, as sensible elements, pertain somehow to the spiritual realm. They propagate through contact, though they may also operate non-haptically, and they can be seen to emblemize how devotion is transmitted and, in the case of Francis de Sales, how one is 'infected' by love. Festivities are the sites of transmission: fireworks and their attendant sounds draw upon emblems of the sun, engaging the viewers' eyes and ears. I will not dwell here on the emotional function of light and sound in spectacles, but rather on the ways in which they come to represent the nature of Salesian sanctity. In order to do this, we need to examine the larger representational network.

Already in Annecy in 1662, on the occasion of the exhumation of the body, the thematic of sunlight and of the transmission of light was dominant. It was conceived by Barthélémy Magistri, a canon of the cathedral. Annecy was the first French city to celebrate the beatification of Francis, just after Rome and before Chambéry and Grenoble. Moreover, this beatification was the first to occur according to 'the rigor of the holy law of the *De non-cultu*',¹⁸ which of course increased its prestige and significance.

¹⁸ Magistri Barthélémy, *Cérémonies et resjouissances faites en la ville d'Annessy sur la solennité de la béatification et l'élévation du corps sacré du bienheureux François de Sales*,

The case for Francis de Sales overcame all the institutional obstacles, rising like the sun, as his supporters implied, after a severe dearth of beatifications and canonisations.

The account of the festivities contains elements that echo the other representations designed to body forth the 'Salesian essence'. We shall start with the description of the first 'appareil', the firework apparatus conceived for the beatification celebrations in January:

[On] fit voir avec autant de magnificence que d'industrielle invention, l'apothéose de ce Saint par la descente d'un globe de feu qui rompant une haute et grande nuée fondit sur une machine d'une rare architecture, et embrasa un soleil exposé à la cime qui brilla longtemps en s'élevant par-dessus de la nuée [sic] d'où il disparut insensiblement; pendant que le corps de l'édifice répandait des feux, des bruits et des clartés infinies, sous un grand boisseau roulant tout en feu, surmonté d'un grand chandelier, hautement allumé et éclatant; pour montrer que la principale idée de tout le sujet était la joie universelle de l'Eglise qui après la rigueur de la sainte loi du non Culte, exposait ce sacré flambeau à la vénération des fidèles.¹⁹

The whole apparatus is set ablaze, as if by contagion or contamination, like something that spreads by itself, after the initial divine and/or solar impulse, as the engraving suggests [Fig. 9]. The fire encompasses the whole machine, which encapsulates in a detailed emblematic programme (given later on in the account) the full import of Francis's sanctification. On this account, the flames ignite the whole world or, at least, mirror how the world shall be engulfed by the universal cult of the saint. The fiery globe, source of the initial spark, keeps coming back as a feature of the celebrations and of Salesian iconography. Adrien Gambart, in his *Vie symbolique de François de Sales*, published in 1664,²⁰ devoted emblem 29 [Fig. 10] to the supranatural apparition of a fiery and sparkling globe, which is said to have appeared in the room where Francis de Sales was writing the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*. It appears in several frontispieces but with a slight difference: Francis de Sales is praying in front of an altar, the globe appearing before him, in a scene reminiscent of the Mass of Saint Gregory [Fig. 11]. We find it again in Annecy in 1666, as part of the canonisation

le 30. d'avril 1662 (Annecy, Pierre Delachinal: 1662) 11: 'après la rigueur de la sainte loi du non Culte'.

¹⁹ Magistri, *Cérémonies et resjouissances* 10–11.

²⁰ Gambart Adrien, *La Vie symbolique du Bienheureux François de Sales, Evêque et Prince de Genève, comprise sous le voile de 52 emblèmes, qui marquent le caractère de ses principales vertus, avec autant de méditations ou de réflexions pieuses, pour exciter les âmes* (Paris, aux frais de l'auteur pour l'usage des religieuses de la Visitation, & à la disposition de celles du Fauxbourg saint Jacques: 1664).



Fig. 9. Engraved frontispiece to Barthélémy Magistri, *Cérémonies et resjouissances faites en la ville d'Annessy sur la solennité de la béatification et l'élévation du corps sacré du bienheureux François de Sales, le 30. d'avril 1662* (Annecy, Pierre Delachinal: 1662). © Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art.



Fig. 10. Albert Flamen, « Emblem 29 ». Engraving from Adrien Gambart, *La Vie symbolique de François de Sales* (Paris, aux frais de l'auteur: 1664). Université catholique de Louvain, Bibliothèque universitaire.



Fig. 11. Leonard Gautier, *Le Vray Portrait du Bienheureux Messire François de Sales*, 1624. Engraving. Université catholique de Louvain, Bibliothèque universitaire.



Fig. 12. J. de Lamonce, « Façade du Portail et décoration de l'Eglise de la Visitation Sainte Marie », engraved folding plate from [Ménestrier Claude-François], *Nouvel astre du ciel de l'Eglise. Dessein de l'appareil dressé dans le Premier Monastère de la Visitation Sainte-Marie d'Annessy, à l'occasion de la première solennité faite pour la Canonisation de S. François de Sales, évêque et prince de Genève, fondateur de l'Institut de la Visitation, depuis le 9 mai de l'année 1666 jusqu'au seizième du même mois* (Grenoble, Robert Philippes: 1666), opp. p. 10. © Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art.

celebrations, on the façade of the church [Fig. 12], which is described as having been transformed into the Temple of the Sun by Ménestrier, who designed the feast.

Coming back to the account of the beatification in Annecy, the fireworks in April follow the same pattern of self-propagation as the one just mentioned and used in January:

L'édifice s'élevait par plusieurs degrés dont les angles était distingués de vases ardents qui en le consumant finissaient en cœur jusques à la pyramide qui achevait le tout, et portait en sa pointe la couronne royale de Savoie, surmontée de la mitre éclatant de ce Saint, formée dans un soleil, ou diadème, qui de son brillant allumait tout d'un temps quatre couronnes qui roulaient enflammées sur les quatre Tours qui flanquaient la machine [...].²¹

This huge bonfire was accompanied and followed by what Magistri called 'bruits de guerre', 'sounds of war', that is, salvos, and the following day,

²¹ Magistri, *Cérémonies et resjouissances* 20.

by fanfares, tintamarres, bells, drums, artillery salvos, trumpets, all this mixed up, confused within the same 'sound':

La musique continua à merveilles, pendant *le bruit, qui tout soudain éclatât*, des Fanfares des Trompettes, du son des Cloches et des Tambours, du Tintamarre des Mousquerades, et de l'Artillerie du Château et du Clocher de Saint-Dominique.²²

Detailing the description of the machine used to set the fireworks, Magistri clearly designates the intention of the fire:

Chaque pièce du marbre dont il était bâti [le Mausolée] portait un cœur ardent et enflammé du feu céleste, qui doit embraser tous les cœurs de nos citoyens dans l'école de cet incomparable Docteur de l'Amour Divin.²³

One of the first emblems described shows a heart inflamed by rays of sunlight, poised atop a big bonfire:

Tout le reste était occupé par les emblèmes et les devises, dont la première de cette face était un miroir ardent élevé, qui allumait un grand feu par la réfraction des rayons du soleil [...], ce qui exprimait les grands effets que l'Eglise se promet de la glorification de ce bienheureux.²⁴

Divine Love fuels the fire and is also emblematised by it. The way it propagates and touches the spectator further becomes obvious if one recalls the topos codified in divine and profane love poetry – inherited mainly from the Petrarquian tradition and courtly literature – in which love is communicated through the (fatal) gaze of the lover; this forceful gaze is frequently ascribed, in mystical and spiritual poetry, to Christ. The blindingly intense light, reinforced by the presence of clouds and smoke, strikes the spectator's eyes in order to set his/her heart on fire, much in the way shown by Gambart's emblem 31 [Fig. 13], which in turn resembles the emblem just described by Magistri. The inflamed heart became a distinctive iconographic attribute of Francis de Sales; it superimposes the iconography of Augustine onto Francis's image, as becomes obvious when the frontispiece to Maupas du Tour's biography of Francis [Fig. 14] is compared to Philippe de Champaigne's painting of *Augustine* [Fig. 15].

Designed by Ménestrier, the celebration that took place in Annecy in 1666 thematizes the exchange of inflamed and amorous gazes, construing

²² Ibidem 21. My italics.

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Ibidem.



Fig. 13. Albert Flamen, « Emblem 31 ». Engraving from Adrien Gambart, *La Vie symbolique de François de Sales* (Paris, aux frais de l'auteur: 1664). Université catholique de Louvain, Bibliothèque universitaire.



Fig. 14. François Chauveau, engraved frontispiece to Henry de Maupas du Tour, *La vie du vénérable serviteur de Dieu, François de Sales, evesque de Genève, fondateur des Religieuses de la Visitation de Sainte-Marie. Augmentée de la sixième & dernière Partie de sa Vie* (Paris, Nicolas Belley: 1707). Université catholique de Louvain, Bibliothèque universitaire.



Fig. 15. Philippe de Champaigne, *Saint Augustine* (ca. 1645–1650). Oil on canvas, 78.7 × 62.2 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

the transits of the eye as the ultimate means of affecting the spectator.²⁵ There the church was transformed into a Temple of the Sun. Ménestrier explains at length the reason for this transformation: it is based on Greek religious culture, and on the three distinctive features that Ficino ascribed to the Sun; these features are converted into emblematic devices that allude to Francis de Sales. First of all, the Sun is said to be *panepiscopos*, which Ménestrier translates and glosses as 'tout voyant, ou pour ainsi dire tout évesque'. He proceeds to describe its three distinctive main qualities, taken from Ficino: the sun is 'tout à tous, étant la cause universelle de toutes les productions qui se font dans la nature'; then 'un *Agent doux et efficace*, qui agit dans tous les estres et se communique à eux sans violence'; and finally 'le Directeur universel des Temps des Saisons et des Applications des hommes'.²⁶ Omnipresent, the sun always and everywhere affects everyone and everything. 'Tout voyant', it is a universal phenomenon that operates through the gaze.

But there is more: looking at this light can elicit love in the heart of spectators, and they in return can move towards this fire, this fiery and enkindling gaze, drawn in by a kind of fascination or magnetization, an effect thematised in both descriptions and in Francis's life. Francis is said to be 'l'aymant de tous les cœurs' and is called the 'Ayman des amoureux sacrés'.²⁷ Again, if we turn to Gambart and his *Vie symbolique*, emblem 32 [Fig. 16] compares Francis's heart to a magnet, in reference to a letter by Francis to a Visitandine, dated 6 January 1619, in which the infant Jesus is called a 'tire cœur', a 'heart puller': 'Ou que nous soyons fer par dureté, ou que nous soyons paille par imbecillité, nous nous devons joindre à ce souverain petit Poupon, qui est un vrai tire cœur'.²⁸ Gambart uses the same image in the 'éclaircissements' that expound the emblem:

Ce cœur d'aymant qui attire & enchaîne apres soy tous ces autres, est le symbole de l'amour cordial de nostre Bienheureux, qui a esté en son temps

²⁵ Ménestrier Claude-François, *Nouvel astre du ciel de l'Eglise. Dessein de l'appareil dressé dans le Premier Monastère de la Visitation Sainte-Marie d'Annessy, à l'occasion de la première solennité faite pour la Canonisation de S. François de Sales, évesque et prince de Genève, fondateur de l'Institut de la Visitation, depuis le 9 mai de l'année 1666 jusqu'au seizième du même mois* (Grenoble, Robert Philippes: 1666).

²⁶ Ibidem 5.

²⁷ Ménestrier, *Nouvel astre* 86.

²⁸ François de Sales, *Œuvres de saint François de Sales, évêque et prince de Genève et docteur de l'Eglise, publiée par les soins des religieuses de la Visitation du 1^{er} monastère d'Annecy, Édition complète*, 27 vols. (Annecy: J. Niérat, 1892–1964) XVIII 335.



Fig. 16. Albert Flamen, « Emblem 32 ». Engraving from Adrien Gambart Adrien, *La Vie symbolique de François de Sales* (Paris, aux frais de l'auteur: 1664). Université catholique de Louvain, Bibliothèque universitaire.

& est encore apresent un vray tire-cœur, comme il dit luy mesme de celuy du Sauveur en sa naissance.²⁹

I have shown elsewhere how the emblems diffract and reshape the hagiographical portrait of the saint.³⁰ This emblematic fashioning should now be attached, or better, hinged to this other portrait, intangibly figural and mesmerising, that emerges out of clouds, smoke, light, fire, and noise, and takes possession of the spectators' hearts and souls. It creates a proper *ex-static* portrait that locates the spectator 'outside himself', inducing the synesthetic experience of 'sacer horror' that Annick Delfosse has discerned in the Jesuit festivities held to celebrate the multiple beatifications and canonisations of 1622.³¹ This peculiarly immersive experience of spectacle gave agency to the many portraits and relics that populated these celebrations, to the extent that the saint seemed, now and forever, to have been restored to life:

[Son portrait] y était tiré si près du naturel et selon sa stature ordinaire, qu'une infinité de personnes qui vivent encore, après le bonheur de l'avoir vu et connu, à l'aspect de ce charmant objet qui renouvelait en eux une si chère Idée, s'écriaient à haute voix, versant des larmes de joie : ah ! Le voilà, le voilà encore ! Notre Saint, notre Père.³²

²⁹ Gambart, *Vie symbolique* 125.

³⁰ See Guiderdoni A., "Figure de la sainteté salésienne par elle-même : Rencontrer saint François de Sales en textes et en images", in Chorprenning J. (ed.), *Human Encounter in the Salesian Tradition: Collected Essays* (Philadelphia: 2007) 283–310; and eadem, "The Contexts of Adrien Gambart's Emblem Book: Literary, Cultural, Biographical, and Christological", in Gambart A., *La vie symbolique du bien-heureux François de Sales*, ed. E. Stopp (Philadelphia: 2005) 11–40.

³¹ See Delfosse A., "From Universal to Local: Celebrating New Saints in the Southern Netherlands", paper given at the Renaissance Society of America annual meeting, Washington D.C., 22 March 2012; and Dekoninck R. – Delbeke M. – Delfosse A. – Vermeir K., "Mise en image du spectacle et spectacularisation de l'image à l'âge baroque", in Lenain Th. (ed.), *Image et spectacle. Actes du colloque international (Bruxelles, 3–5 mai 2012)* (forthcoming).

³² Magistri, *Cérémonies et résjouissances* 34.

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- , *Les œuvres du bien-heureux François de Sales, evesque et prince de Geneve [...] ou est adioustee la vie de ce parfait prelat, composée nouvellement par le P. Nicolas Talon, Tome second: contenant ses sermons, plusieurs fragments & epistres nouvelles. Avec un Traitté de la conduite spirituelle par le P.N. Caussin* (Paris, Arnould Cottinet, Jean Roger et Thomas Lozet: 1641).
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OLD EMBLEMS, NEW MEANING:
A CRITICAL VISUAL ACCOUNT OF THE REFORMATION
IN DE HOOGHE'S *HIEROGLYPHICA**

Trudeliën van 't Hof

Around 1700, the famous Dutch etcher Romeyn de Hooghe (1645–1708) produced a book on the origin, decay and reformation of religion, titled *Hieroglyphica of merkebeelden der oude volkeren, namentlyk Egyptenaren, Chaldeeuwen, Feniciers, Joden, Grieken, Romeynen, enz.: nevens een omstandig bericht van het verval en voortkruypende, verbastering der godsdiensten door verscheyde eeuwen; en eyndelyk de Hervorming, tot op deze tyden toe vervolgt*.¹ Although a book on religious history was no novelty, De Hooghe had an original approach. Instead of writing this history in text, De Hooghe visualized it, using images as his main 'language' and text only for explanatory purposes.

This article analyzes how De Hooghe used these emblematic images in his account of the history of religion. Religion was an important topic in the graphic oeuvre of De Hooghe: he illustrated many religious books ranging from mnemonic, meditative and spiritual works to a Lutheran Bible and a book containing the most important biblical stories.² Although these biblical etchings might have been more appropriate for the colloquium's scriptural focus, I think De Hooghe's *Hieroglyphica* complements contributions on scriptural visual exegesis with a broader view on contemporary religious issues. As such, *Hieroglyphica* can be seen as a continuation of the more mnemonic scriptural illustrations using the same visual instrument to provide readers with historical interpretations of true

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¹ *Hieroglyphica, or Emblems of the Ancient Peoples: Egyptians, Chaldaeans, Phoenicians, Jews, Greek, Romans, etc. Containing an Exhaustive Essay on the Progressive Decline and Corruption of Religion through the Ages, and Its Recent Reformation until the Present* (Amsterdam, Joris von der Woude: 1735).

² *Biblia, dat is, de gantsche H. Schriftuure* (Luther translation) (Amsterdam, Jacob Lindenberg: 1702); Hooghe Romeyn de – Vos Henricus, *Alle de voornaamste historien des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments. Verbeeld in uytsteekende konstplaatzen*. (Amsterdam, Jacob Lindenberg: 1703).

religion, usable in contemporary debates. The more theoretical questions of the colloquium are central to the book. *Hieroglyphica* provides us with ideas on 'hieroglyphical' images as mediators of religious truths *par excellence*, and shows how existing engravings were used and adapted in De Hooghe's multi-interpretable 'exegesis' of religious history.

Although the art historian Derk Snoep states that Romeyn de Hooghe's religious etchings in his *Hieroglyphica* were 'composed of his own inventions only', there are many examples in the book that are copied from the work of other artists.³ Whilst composing this book, De Hooghe made use of different visual and textual sources such as Pierio Valeriano Bolzani, Carel van Mander, Athanasius Kircher, Vincenzo Cartari, Andrea Alciato and Cesare Ripa. He combined them with his own inventions. At the time, copying was not regarded as an inferior practice: deriving elements from other people's work was highly appreciated within the art-theoretical notion of imitation and emulation.⁴ The related realm of emblem books shows a similar picture: Judith Dundas in her study on the emblem of the English Renaissance writer Henry Peacham even states that 'the more Peacham's emblems are studied, the less original they prove to be'.⁵ The same appears to be applicable to De Hooghe's *Hieroglyphica*.

Nevertheless, what we encounter in *Hieroglyphica* is not simply a compilation of known images, as De Hooghe adapts existing imagery in specific ways. It is the process of adaptation that is interesting and raises the question of what the actual *meaning* of these alterations was. In what manner did De Hooghe adapt these existing images and how did this generate a new or different meaning in the pictures, contributing to his personal interpretation of religion and religious decay?⁶ Of special interest in

³ Snoep D., *Praal en propaganda: triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn: 1975) 178.

⁴ Adams A., "Reproduction and Authenticity in Bernard Picart's *Impostures Innocentes*", in Hunt L. – Jacob M.C. – Mijnhardt W.W. (eds.), *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion* (Los Angeles: 2010) 75–104; Knolle P., *Comiecque tafereelen: over 18de-eeuwse Nederlandse spotprenten* (Amsterdam: 1983) 8; Waals J. van der, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw: van kunst tot kastpapier* (Rotterdam: 2006) 14, 105; Orenstein N., "Sleeping Caps, City Views, and State Funerals: Privileges for Prints in the Dutch Republic, 1593–1650", in Golanhny A. – Mochizuki M.M. – Vergara L. (eds.), *In His Milieu. Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias* (Amsterdam: 2006) 313–346.

⁵ Dundas J., "Imitation and Originality in Peacham's Emblems", in: Westerweel B. (ed.), *Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Field of the Emblem, Symbola et emblemata 8* (Leiden: 1997) 107.

⁶ On religious decline in *Hieroglyphica*, see Hof T. van 't, "Radical, Partisan or Idealistic? De Hooghe's Historical Presentation of Religious Decline and Reformation in His *Hieroglyphica*", in Christin O. – Krumenacker Y. (eds.), *Les Protestants à l'époque moderne. Une approche anthropologique* (Rennes: forthcoming).

this matter is the fact that De Hooghe did not belong to the ranks of intellectuals, theologians, teachers, and philosophers, who usually published on religious or church-historical topics. Therefore *Hieroglyphica* might provide an insight into the way religion as a changing historical concept was perceived by a group of 'cultural brokers' from the better circles of the Dutch citizenry.⁷

The focus of this article will be on the specific historical case of the Lutheran Reformation, treated in chapter 59. This provides an opportunity to examine one plate in detail, trying to make sense of the choices and changes the artist made. In order to research the meaning of visual alterations in religious emblematic and hieroglyphic images, I will first pay attention to the theoretical background of imitation and adaptation in the visual realm. Subsequently, the Reformation print will be analysed in both its context and content. The actual changes in the content will be discussed in three sessions, respectively 'replacing', 'adding', and 'composing'. By analyzing De Hooghe's re-use and remodelling of existing reformation images, I hope to shed light on De Hooghe's notion of religion and increase the insight in the way 'old' religious images were used to fit new religious concepts.

Early Modern Repetition, Adaptation and the Essence in Hieroglyphs

As using and adapting (parts of) existing images in creating new pictures is a widespread phenomenon in early modern art history, the way to approach such linked images differs among scholars. On the one hand, there is the down-to-earth opinion of people, such as Ilja Veldman, who generally consider repetition simply as a time-and-money-saving device, creating artistic variation.⁸ On the other hand there are the academics who suppose that artists used such variation for a reason, and who search for a more theoretical basis to analyze those visual connections.

⁷ See Klebusek M. – Noldus B.V. (eds.), *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 154 (Leiden: 2011); Spaans J., *Graphic Satire and Religious Change: The Dutch Republic, 1676–1707*, Brill's Series in Church History 53 (Leiden: 2011) 17, 18; Bunge W. van, *From Stevin to Spinoza. An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-century Dutch Republic*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 103 (Leiden: 2011).

⁸ Veldman I.M., "Familiar Customs and Exotic Rituals: Picart's Illustrations for *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples*", *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 33 (2007/2008) 94–111.

The importance of this topic has been historically underlined by art historians Eric Jan Sluijter, Thijs Weststeijn and Maria Loh, who have researched the concept of imitation in early modern writings, offering a very valuable framework. Problematic is, however, that much of their research is based on 'high' art, paintings and treatises on painting, which makes their terms not directly applicable to De Hooghe's 'hieroglyphic' images. Those images were not in the first place produced as artistic *tours de force*, but, as I will argue, were designed to convey a specific (religious) message in allegorical form. Thus, whereas Sluijter and Weststeijn use the artistic term 'imitation' frequently, and Loh deploys the rather general term 'repetition', these terms are too unspecific to fit *Hieroglyphica*. For De Hooghe's hieroglyphic engravings, closely related to both image and text, the term 'interpictorality' is as yet most suited.⁹ Like its text equivalent, interpictorality can be explained clearly with 'pictorial references to other images'.¹⁰ Or, in the words of art historian Cynthia Hahn, 'the notion that readers respond to textual references and cues by bringing previously read texts to bear on current acts of reading'.¹¹ In the same way visual references may raise questions and create tension.

Contemporary sources therefore describe imitation as a proof of skilfulness when changes are made and new layers are added.¹² Especially interesting are the specific demands such new layers had to meet. Some simple touching up or slight changes in composition was not enough: the artist had to show that he had a superior comprehension of the essence of the

⁹ See, for an overview, Plett H.F. (ed.), *Intertextuality* (Berlin – New York: 1991), and Sanders J., *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London – New York: 2006), who also devotes a chapter to appropriating the arts and sciences. Difficult in this respect is the wide range of terms that are used. Secondary literature offers concepts like intervisuality, interpictorality (also spelled as interpicturelity), interfigurality, repetition, accutezza, pastiche, interikoniziteit, quoting, copying, but also more 'classical' terms like 'imitation and emulation', all more or less referring to similarity and dissimilarity in visual sources.

¹⁰ Thomas J., "Reflections on Illustration: the Database of Mid-Victorian Wood-Engraved Illustration (DMVI)", *Journal of Illustration Studies* (2007) (<<http://www.jois.cf.ac.uk/articles.php?article=37>>, 8 May 2012).

¹¹ Loh M.H., "New and Improved: Repetition as Originality in Italian Baroque Practice and Theory", *The Art Bulletin*, 86 (2004) 477–504; Hahn C., "Interpictorality in the Limoges Chasses of Stephan, Martial, and Valerie", in Hourihane C. (ed.), *Image and Belief: Studies in Celebration of the Eighteenth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: 1999) 109.

¹² Loh, "New and Improved" 497–499.

subject imagined, and that his new representation provided a 'truer' image of the object or theme depicted.¹³

It is in this emphasis on the essence of the subjects imagined that the link with the early modern hieroglyphical hype is apparent. Before the cracking of the Egyptian hieroglyphic code by Jean-François Champollion in the early nineteenth century, this ancient language was regarded as the bearer of hidden divine knowledge.¹⁴ Whereas texts were widely regarded as unable to transmit such delicate and complicated matters, pictures were considered to have the ability to contain divine matters in their true essence. Therefore, an incredible amount of people tried to decipher hieroglyphic images and attempted to 'extract' the true message regarding the object depicted. As art historian Ernst Gombrich explains in his interesting paper on the symbolic function of the image in so-called Neo-Platonic thought:

the gravity with which the casuistry of the emblem and device was discussed by otherwise perfectly sane and intelligent people remains an inexplicable freak of fashion unless we understand that for them a truth condensed into a visual image was somehow nearer to the realm of absolute truth than one explained in words.¹⁵

In the artistic realm, this hieroglyphic mode resulted not only in attempts to 'translate' the images artists encountered, but also in attempts to create images in a hieroglyphic way, containing their very essence, their true character. And although the period in which De Hooghe produced his book was witness to a dilution and vulgarization of the hieroglyphic mode – in the visual realm hieroglyphs developed into a more general symbolism,

¹³ On the notion of 'good imitation', see also Weststeijn M.A., "Imitatie in Samuel van Hoogstratens Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkunst", *De zeventiende eeuw* 21 (2005) 256. Good imitation was described as filling the new piece of art with more power and spirit. Especially Junius explains this when he orders that 'the imitator should use his example as a point of departure for an intense contemplation, in which he tries to reconstruct the reality of the old master, even before he put a dash on the canvas, in his mind's eye.'

¹⁴ Since the fifteenth century, scholars were intrigued by hieroglyphics, and the genre became really fashionable. Although in the end of the seventeenth century it was somewhat outdated, De Hooghe still worked in this baroque, symbolic style. Many of the hieroglyphs from *Hieroglyphica* can be recognised in his earlier work. See Iversen E., *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Copenhagen: 1961); Dieckmann L., *Hieroglyphics: the History of a Literary Symbol* (St. Louis: 1970); Burger C.P., "Het Hieroglyphenschrift van de Renaissance", *Het Boek* 13 (1924) 273–300; Assmann J., *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA – London: 1997) 19.

¹⁵ Gombrich E.H., "Icones Symbolicae: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948) 173.

and in the theological field, the mode was deployed as textual explanation of biblical terms and themes – the original Neo-Platonic thought lingered on.¹⁶ De Hooghe's work echoes it clearly. In his introduction to *Hieroglyphica*, for example, he states that hieroglyphs, defined as 'sacred engravings', were capable of transmitting clarity and beauty and touching the soul of the viewer.¹⁷ They could 'penetrate species and things to the core' and were the best instrument to convey essential matters to an audience.¹⁸ Creating religious hieroglyphs meant trying to grasp the core of the invisible world of divine matters in a more or less platonic way, and visualize it. It is here that the hieroglyphic genre fits in with the application of artistic imitation: both pursue the representation of the original, divine essence of objects and stories. This also indicates the importance of change in these images: changing these images indicates a shift in commonly accepted views on the essence of religion.¹⁹

Thus, although the commonsensical comment on visual alterations resulting from time and cost-saving arguments has to be kept in mind, it seems that these practical explanations do not do justice to De Hooghe's *Hieroglyphica*. The amount of adaptations, changes and new compositions, along with the link to the hieroglyphic religious genre, denotes a strategy in which the artist employed these variations to function in a personalized and new account of Reformation history.²⁰

Contextualizing (Visual) Reformation History

Whilst analysing Romeyn de Hooghe's historical etching on the Reformation, it is essential to also examine the context in which such a history should be seen. The Reformation as a church-historical theme was treated in many books in the Republic and abroad. As said, almost all the authors

¹⁶ Dieckmann, *Hieroglyphics* 32, 44, 52; Asselt W.J. van, "De neus van de bruid. De profetische en zinnebeeldige godgeleerdheid van Henricus Groenewegen en Johannes D'Outrein", in Broeyer F.M.G. – Honée E.M.V.M. (eds.), *Profetie en godsspraak in de geschiedenis van het christendom* (Zoetermeer: 1997) 168–171; Weststeijn T., "From Hieroglyphs to Universal Characters. Pictography in the Early Modern Netherlands", in Jorink E. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Art and Science in the Early Modern Netherlands / Kunst en wetenschap in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 61 (2011) 238–281.

¹⁷ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 12, 15.

¹⁸ Ibidem, Inleyding.

¹⁹ Gombrich, "Icones Symbolicae" 167, 168, 181.

²⁰ Veldman, "Familiar Customs and Exotic Rituals" 109, 110.

were learned theologians, most of the time affiliated with one or another church denomination to which they adapted their account of the history of the Reformation.²¹ For a number of these books De Hooghe created etchings on the Reformation and related subjects. He etched the frontispieces for both the well-known church-historical survey, *History of the Reformation and Other Church Histories in and around the Netherlands* by the Reverend Gerardus Brandt [Fig. 1], and Gilbert Burnet's account of the English Reformation, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England* [Fig. 2]. De Hooghe was also involved in producing illustrations for the controversial church-historical survey, *Nonpartisan History of the Church and of Heretics* (1699–1700) by the German theologian Gottfried Arnold [Fig. 3].

In his book, Arnold presented the history of the church as one of decay. True religion was no longer found in churches, not even Protestant ones, but amongst individual believers and sects, the heretics past and present. For this book De Hooghe produced both the frontispiece and a few illustrations of key figures from Reformation history.²² In order to contextualize the Reformation as depicted in *Hieroglyphica*, the other books De Hooghe illustrated are of great use. Since not much is known about what books Romeyn de Hooghe owned, or about his level of knowledge of Reformation history, the books he illustrated may function as comparison material vis-à-vis *Hieroglyphica*. In order to be capable of etching fitting frontispieces for all three authors, it is very probable that De Hooghe read the books he needed to illustrate, or at least was acquainted with their content, scope and purpose. This assumption is emphasized by the fact that for his description of Muhammad in *Hieroglyphica*, De Hooghe used specific parts of Gottfried Arnold's information on the Muslim prophet. Nevertheless, other parts of Arnold's description of Muhammad were left out of *Hieroglyphica*. Thus, De Hooghe was familiar with the specific context of the book and did not hesitate to use what suited him. This makes it interesting to analyze De Hooghe's account of the Reformation and discover the extent to which he was influenced by these other writers.²³

²¹ Dickens A.G. – Tonkin J., *The Reformation in Historical Thought* (Oxford: 1985) 95.

²² Arnold Gottfried, *Historie der kerken en ketteren, van den beginne des Nieuwes Testaments tot aan het jaar onzes Heeren 1688* (Amsterdam, Sebastiaan Petzold: 1701) I 2 (Dutch translation of the original German *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie* [Leipzig – Frankfurt am Main, Thomas Fritsch: 1699]).

²³ For the copied parts, see Arnold, *Historie* I 468, and De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 337.



Fig. 1. Romeyn de Hooghe, etched frontispiece to G. Brandt's *Historie der Reformatie en andre kerkelyke geschiedenissen in en omtrent de Nederlanden*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, Jan Rieuwerts: 1671–1704). University Library Utrecht (Gunning 3 L 15 RARIORA).



Fig. 2. Romeyn de Hooghe, etched frontispiece to G. Burnet's *Historie van de Reformatie der kerke van Engeland*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, Jan ten Hoorn: 1686). University Library Utrecht (RIJS 195–535).



Fig. 3. Romeyn de Hooghe, etched frontispiece to Gottfried Arnold's *Historie der kerken en ketteren: van den beginne des Nieuwen Testaments tot aan het jaar onses heeren 1688*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, Sebastiaan Petzold: 1701–1729). University Library Utrecht (NAA 116 D 9).

Turning to image 59 itself, with the caption *On the Reformation* [Van de Hervorming] [Fig. 4], two aspects are particularly interesting. The first is the fact that De Hooghe uses visual material as the primary medium to tell his religious history. Although the images are sometimes based on textual sources, in *Hieroglyphica* the visuals are leading. This emphasis on the image instead of the text fitted in with the genre of hieroglyphs, briefly discussed above, but was also familiar territory for De Hooghe, who was an expert in producing frontispieces.²⁴ A frontispiece needed to capture the complex core of the book; together with the title-page it would provide the first acquaintance of the reader with the book. In order to manage such a difficult task, artists frequently turned to allegory, full of symbols and personifications.²⁵ Comparing the images of *Hieroglyphica* with title prints for other (religious) books we find a marked resemblance in the depiction of the content, the composition, style, and allegorical approach. Usually they were intended both to 'reveal' and to 'obscure' meanings: the complex symbolism whetted the appetites of experienced readers, whereas the vulgar were merely baffled.²⁶ Despite his use of this allegorical 'veiled' genre, De Hooghe insists on presenting clear and understandable hieroglyphs. Rejecting the long tradition in which mysterious language was an instrument in the hands of religious leaders and clerics to deceive simple believers, De Hooghe argues that 'we [artists] should be willing to generously pass on the things we understood from the ancients'. But, he follows, 'in this passing on, we should be moderate, and not share too much, to prevent the condemnation of the ancients, or the teacher himself'.²⁷ Thus with the engravings of *Hieroglyphica* De Hooghe, as in his frontispieces, wanted to capture the 'true' story of religion, indicating its essence and at the same time lifting the veil of its historical deceit.

Related to this complex title-print genre we find the second interesting characteristic of our plate, and of *Hieroglyphica* as a whole, which is found in the original way De Hooghe composed his hieroglyphs. Most artists

²⁴ Snoep, *Praal en propaganda* 105. De Hooghe's popularity in the genre is especially underlined by the title prints he made for the *Hollandsche Mercurius*, a magazine discussing current issues. For twenty years the author invented title prints based on the most important events of the year, which, considering the period, must have been a great success.

²⁵ Bartlings N., "Hier toont voor 't oog het tijtelblad den inhoud in het boek vervat", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 17 (2002) 243–258.

²⁶ Corbett M. – Lightbown R., *The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-page in England, 1550–1660* (London: 1979) 12, 31.

²⁷ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica*, Verklaring van de Titelprent 23, 24, 25.



Fig. 4. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Van de Reformatie*. Etching from *Hieroglyphica of merkbeelden der oude volkeren, namentlyk Egyptenaren, Chaldeeuwen, Feniciers, Joden, Grieken, Romeynen, enz.: nevens een omstandig bericht van het verval en voortkruypende, verbastering der godsdiensten door verscheyde eeuwen; en eyndelyk de Hervorming, tot op deze tyden toe vervolgt* (Amsterdam, Joris van der Woude: 1735), plate 59. Private collection.

copied by De Hooghe depicted their symbolic images in isolation. Thus, Ripa displays one emblem at a time, Cartari, Bolzani and Van Mander all treat one god per chapter, and emblems concern specific concepts. Such an isolated approach fits in with the independent character of the separate images and with the rise of encyclopaedic surveys in which subjects were organized as individual lemmas, often in alphabetical order. Romeyn de Hooghe's images, however, show a compilation of figures from different times, places and religious backgrounds, all put together in one frame. As we shall see, this combination of otherwise not necessarily connected figures attributes a new meaning to the themes discussed. On the one hand, it assigns a concrete historical context to the figures and themes, and, on the other hand, it points to universal characteristics of religion, exceeding both time and space.²⁸

De Hooghe's Layered Image of the Reformation

Concentrating on the center of plate 59 we find the symbol for the *Public Preaching of the Word*, figure C, depicted as a courageous virgin [Fig. 4]. Carrying the outward characteristics of a bishop and a professor, namely a mitre and a professor's gown, and standing before the statue of the Elector of Saxony, this figure represents the public Lutheran Protestant churches, closely allied to the state.²⁹ Despite these specific characteristics of the figure, De Hooghe did not invent this image himself. He based it on the well-known emblem of 'reform' or 'reformation' ('riforma') by Cesare Ripa who produced his influential book, *Iconologia*, in 1593, more than a century prior to *Hieroglyphica* [Fig. 5].³⁰

When comparing both images we can clearly see the resemblance: both images depict a woman carrying a pruning hook and a book; both

²⁸ This comparative approach becomes even clearer in thematic etchings on topics such as 'creation', 'predestination' and 'the Deluge', where all kinds of religions are presented next to each other.

²⁹ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 423. De Hooghe explains these characteristics by mentioning that the Lutheran Protestant church held on to bishops and founded multiple seminars ('Die Maagd [...] draagt nog een Myter en Kerkgewaad; wyl de zelve nog Bisschoppen en veele Cieraden heeft overgehouden. Zy is bekleed met eene Hoogheleeraars Rok, om de Heerlyke Hooge Scholen, die zy opgestelt heeft').

³⁰ Dirck Pietersz. Pers' Dutch translation of the book (*Iconologia, of uytbeeldingen des Verstands* [Amsterdam, Dirck Pietersz. Pers: 1644]) contained different images than the Italian original and lacked the 'reformation' image. It might be possible that De Hooghe based his image on the Dutch text only, or that he knew the Italian version of the book.



Fig. 5. *Riforma*. Illustration to Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (Padua: 1611; facsimile ed. New York – London: 1976).

symbolize reformation.³¹ The legends underscore the similarity as well, as both texts mention the pruning hook as a means of separating the good from the bad vines.³² With this symbol the reference is made to the *Gospel of John* in which Jesus mentions the cutting and pruning of religious branches, and as such, both images can be seen as contemporary visual exegeses of the Bible. Despite these similarities between the two versions, De Hooghe's image was no ordinary copy from Ripa's famous *Iconologia*. As we will see, he substantially altered the existing image and added new layers of meaning.

³¹ That both figures are symbolized by women results from the feminine gender of the Latin word 'Riforma'.

³² De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 423; Ripa Cesare, *Iconologia* (Hildesheim – New York: 1970) 462.

Replacing: From Roman Catholic to Lutheran

When analyzing the changes made, it is again important to view them in their context. In that respect, one of the main differences between Ripa and De Hooghe is found in their religious background. As a Catholic, Cesare Ripa was involved in the Counter-reformation, while the Protestant De Hooghe was more concerned with the Protestant Reformation. This becomes apparent in two details of the image.

Ripa's *Iconologia* depicts reformation as an elderly matron, as according to the legend, elderly people are 'most proper to reform and govern'.³³ To Ripa, reformation was something to be executed by, or at least within, the old Catholic Church, therefore his personification was an elderly woman. She also characterizes the Catholic Church as the 'Mother Church'. It was from this old religious 'genealogical tree' that the vines were supposed to be pruned, in order to keep the church healthy.³⁴ In De Hooghe's image, however, we find a lively young woman, standing straight. For the Protestant De Hooghe, the Reformation was by definition Luther's movement, which was new, untainted, untouched, like 'a virgin'.³⁵ This replacement of the old by the young woman can also be seen in the frontispieces De Hooghe produced for Gerardus Brandt's Reformation account and Gilbert Burnet's church history [Figs. 6 and 7].³⁶

The second alteration De Hooghe made is to the book in the hand of the woman, which he also adapts from Catholic to Protestant. In Ripa's version this book contains the Latin phrase 'pereunt discrimine nullo amiss[a]e leges' (lost laws perish as a result of indiscriminate); hence the pruning hook to carry out the discrimination and preserve the good laws, which was of great importance in Ripa's period of Counter-reformation.³⁷ In *Hieroglyphica* this Catholic emphasis on law actually perished, as

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ Simonds P.M., *Myth, Emblem, and Music in Shakespeare's Cymbeline: An Iconographic Reconstruction* (Newark: 1992) 244, 245. The image of the church as a tree is frequently used to symbolise the different Christian religions. For the reform symbolized in vegetation growth and pruning, see Ladner G.B., "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance", in Meiss M. (ed.), *Essays in honor of Erwin Panofsky*, 2 vols. (New York: 1961) I 303–322.

³⁵ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 423.

³⁶ De Hooghe emphasizes this new start by putting a cock on the head of the Reformation figure. This symbol for wakefulness, according to the book, is part of the Reformation, which also links to an interpretation of a sense of awaking, the dawn of a new day after a period of 'sleep'.

³⁷ Ladner, "Vegetation Symbolism" 303–305.



Fig. 6. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Reformatie*. Detail of Fig 1.



Fig. 7. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Reformatie*. Detail of Fig. 2.

De Hooghe replaced the 'law book' by the Lutheran Confession of Augsburg. Although this seems logical for a Protestant view on reformation, in the light of the classical view on the Reformation and of De Hooghe's other work it is a remarkable substitution. Following Luther's adage of 'sola Scriptura', as a means to counter the human-made laws of the Catholic Church, one might expect the law book to be replaced by the Bible. The fact that Romeyn de Hooghe chose to substitute the Catholic law book with a Protestant confession of faith – instead of the Bible – suggests that De Hooghe did not consider the Lutheran Church radically different from the Church of Rome in its dependence on fixed rules and political power. This idea gains strength in combination with the representation of the Elector of Saxony, the personification of the magisterial Reformation. The deliberate intention of this change also becomes clear in comparison with De Hooghe's earlier depictions of the Reformation. In his work both for Burnet and Brandt and for Arnold, De Hooghe represented the Reformation by a figure holding a Bible [Figs. 6, 7, 8].

Adding: The Reformation with an Islamic Sword

A remarkable third alteration made by De Hooghe is the addition of a sword to the symbol of the *Public Preaching of the Word*. I know of no other example in which the Reformation is visualized with a sword. In religious art the depiction of a sword has several connotations. There are of course the examples in which the spiritual armory from *Ephesians* or the double-edged sword from *Revelation* is visualized, and, related to that, images and paintings of the 'Ecclesia Militans' are known.³⁸ *Hieroglyphica* itself contains examples of such biblical references, for instance the emblem of God's *Redeeming Word* [Zaligmakend Woord] in plate 30, which is represented as a divine figure with a double-edged sword coming from his mouth [Fig. 9].³⁹ But these images always refer to the spiritual, biblical or metaphorical meaning of the weapon, and that is not what is represented in plate 59. In his texts De Hooghe alludes to the symbolic connotation of *Ephesians*, but explains the sword in his image as a concrete tool of violence against aggressors.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Ephesians* 6:14–17.

³⁹ See *Hebrews* 4:12 and *Revelation* 19:15.

⁴⁰ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 423. De Hooghe's allusion to the spiritual armor is found in 'A plastron of true faith straightens her' ('Een Borststuk van 't waare Geloof strekt haar'),



Fig. 8. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Martinus Lutherus*. Etched illustration to Gottfried Arnold's *Historie der kerken en ketteren: van den beginne des Nieuwen Testaments tot aan het jaar onses heeren 1688*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, Sebastiaan Petzold: 1701–1729) p. 73. University Library Utrecht (H fol 392).



Fig. 9. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Zaligmakend Woord*. Detail of etching from *Hieroglyphica of merkbeelden der oude volkeren, namentlyk Egyptenaren, Chaldeeuwen, Feniciers, Joden, Grieken, Romeynen, enz.: nevens een omstandig bericht van het verval en voortkruypende, verbastering der godsdiensten door verscheyde eeuwen; en eyndelyk de Hervorming, tot op deze tyden toe vervolgt* (Amsterdam, Joris van der Woude: 1735), plate 30. Private collection.

More generally, depicting a religious leader with a sword had a negative connotation. It could refer to violence, as can be seen in several Reformation prints and broadsheets in which the pope is depicted as a warrior-pope wearing armor and carrying a sword. Related to this violence, the sword symbolized worldly authority, as opposed to spiritual authority symbolized by sceptres, tiaras, the keys of St. Peter or the Bible. Logically, Protestant churches were usually not characterized by such political symbols.⁴¹

The search for images in which De Hooghe did use a sword as attribute of a religious denomination gives interesting results. In *Hieroglyphica* this occurs in the image of Muhammad [Fig. 10]. This can of course be a coincidence, but this is undermined when comparing this image with the Muhammad print De Hooghe etched for Gottfried Arnold's *Nonpartisan History* [Fig. 11].⁴² There we find the Muslim prophet in exactly the same position as the *Public Preaching of the Word* in *Hieroglyphica*, both putting one leg before the other, reaching for their sword with their right hand, their head turned to the right [Fig. 12].⁴³

In the case of Muhammad it is quite clear why he is depicted carrying a sword. Ever since the Middle Ages, Islam was seen as a heresy, conflated of elements from Christianity, Judaism and mere invention, and characterized by violence.⁴⁴ This idea was especially based on the persistent belief about the conversion technique of Muhammad. Instead of performing miracles, as done by Jesus, most Christians believed that Muhammad and his followers used the sword to convert people to Islam. The fact that Romeyn de Hooghe depicted Muhammad with a sword, both in *Hieroglyphica* and in *Nonpartisan History*, fits in perfectly with the existing image of the Muslim prophet.

But why depict the *Public Preaching of the Word*, the Protestant churches, in the same manner? In his comment, De Hooghe declares that the figure is wearing the sword 'only to defend herself'. He explains

but when it comes to the sword, De Hooghe states that she 'unsheathes the sword of defense, with which she protects the Augsburg Confession' ('en trekt den Degen van tegenweer uyt de Scheede, met welke zy beschermt de Belydenis van Augsburg').

⁴¹ Scribner R.W., *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge – London – New York: 1981) 148–163.

⁴² Arnold, *Historie* I 469.

⁴³ Muhammad holds some kind of pencil in his hand, which meaning is not explained in the text. It probably refers to the commonly held Christian conviction that Muhammad wrote the Quran himself, composing it of many inventions and a few Christian truths.

⁴⁴ Pailin D.A., *Attitudes to Other Religions: Comparative Religion in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century Britain* (Manchester – Dover, NH: 1984) 82, 85.



Fig. 10. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Mohamethaansche religie*. Detail of etching from *Hieroglyphica of merkebeelden der oude volkeren, namentlyk Egyptenaren, Chaldeeuwen, Feniciers, Joden, Grieken, Romeynen, enz.: nevens een omstandig bericht van het verval en voortkruypende, verbastering der godsdiensten door verscheyde eeuwen; en eyndelyk de Hervorming, tot op deze tyden toe vervolgt* (Amsterdam, Joris van der Woude: 1735), plate 46. Private collection.



Fig. 11. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Mahometh*, etched illustration to Gottfried Arnold's *Historie der kerken en ketteren: van den beginne des Nieuwen Testaments tot aan het jaar onses heeren 1688*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, Sebastiaan Petzold: 1701–1729), p. 468. University Library Utrecht (RIJS 109–13 fol).

that violence should always be avoided, but that defending oneself seems 'not entirely against Christ's commandments'.⁴⁵ Although this may be an explanation for the sword, it is still awkward that De Hooghe depicts the Protestant movement and Muhammad in the same manner, especially when this addition is made in a hieroglyphic symbol, which is supposed to represent 'the very essence' of the imagined object. That makes the similarity between the Lutheran movement and Muhammad even more questionable.

More in line with the hieroglyphic genre and the use of swords in visual material is the idea that with this supplement De Hooghe implies that Luther's Reformation, involved in many wars against Catholics, was not as spiritual as it appeared in many historical accounts. The comparison with Muhammad should have made the viewer aware of the fact that violence and political alliances were not reserved for Islam or Catholicism. Similar to Islam, in regarding conversion, Protestantism also relied on the support and power of the state, symbolized by the sword.

It is quite possible that in this matter De Hooghe was influenced by Gottfried Arnold's thinking. Arnold regarded the start of the Reformation as truly Christian, crediting Luther as 'an agent of the holy spirit on earth'. The continuation, however, was disappointing. The great Luther stepped in the same pitfalls as his Catholic predecessors had: he became intolerant, arrogant, and got involved in worldly affairs.⁴⁶ Whereas Arnold attacked the Lutheran church quite bluntly – resulting in a wave of criticism – De Hooghe veiled his criticism on the Reformation, using hieroglyphical emblems and inter pictorality. People who simply read the text could go along with the explanation of the sword as self-defense. Readers who were more focused on hieroglyphic images probably received more of the critical overtones of the attribute. Connoisseurs of De Hooghe's work for Gottfried Arnold would recognize the resemblance with his Muhammad

⁴⁵ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 423. De Hooghe talks about the 'sword of defense' ('den Deegen van tegenweer') and mentions that 'although the Truth would rather Triumph through other Weaponry, it seems not entirely against the Will of Christ to defend oneself, and execute his Revelations' ('Hoewel de Waarheid beter door andere Wapenen wil Zegevieren, zoo schynt het nochtans niet ganschelyk tegen de Wil van Christus, zig zelve te beschermen, en uyt te voeren zyne Openbaringen').

⁴⁶ Dixon C.S., "Faith and History on the Eve of Enlightenment: Ernst Salomon Cyprian, Gottfried Arnold and the *History of Heretics*", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 57 (2006) 41, 53. Arnold even distanced himself from his book, declaring that the tone had been too sharp and too critical.



Fig. 12. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Openbare verkondiging*, detail of Fig. 4.

image and grasp the whole critical meaning of the chapter, to which we will now turn.

As such, the image abides by the rule of both the hieroglyphic and the title-print genre to be 'open to the learned and closed to the vulgar'.⁴⁷ Only connoisseurs of religious images, willing to dig deeper in these hieroglyphs would encounter its true meaning.⁴⁸ Relating these alterations to the theoretical background, it seems to me that they are more than practical adaptations, but indicate a change in the meaning that was assigned to the Reformation.

Composing and Compiling: Disappointing Results

After the alterations in the image itself, I will discuss the new composition that De Hooghe chose for the *Public Preaching of the Word*. In analogy to literary studies, I argue that a new constellation of visual figures in one image creates new tension and a new meaning.⁴⁹ In the artistic realm, this can be compared to the 'pastiche' style as described by Maria Loh, in which existing visual 'ingredients' reworked in a different combination gain a new 'taste'.⁵⁰

In plate 59 of *Hieroglyphica*, this new meaning becomes obvious in the visual 'sequel' surrounding the Lutheran Reformation critically characterising the event as a temporally high point resulting in a disappointing outcome. Starting with the *Public Preaching of the Word*, one would expect to find educated believers spreading the Protestant belief, an idea found in most positive Reformation accounts. In contrast, De Hooghe continues his chapter, and the next, with describing the errors occurring after the

⁴⁷ Corbett – Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece* 12, 31.

⁴⁸ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 23: 'Maar nog is deze vlijt om veel te visschen uyt Prophetien of Merkbbeelden, van meerder nut; als dat men niet schrandere genoeg word om 'er naar vereysch door te zien; dewyl daardoor 't geheel nut van dezelve wel kan verloren worden'.

⁴⁹ Muller W.G., 'Interfiguralität. A Study on the Interdependence of Literary Figures', in Plett H.F. (ed.), *Intertextuality* (Berlin – New York: 1991) 101–121.

⁵⁰ Loh, "New and Improved" 498, 499. This can also be compared with the metaphor of 'Rapensoep' ('turnip soup'); see Sluijter E.J., "Over 'rapen' en wedijver in de Nederlandse schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw", *De zeventiende eeuw* 21 (2005) 267–292. Such an eclectic approach was found throughout the Baroque period and was not restricted to artists but extended to broader realms, especially the religious. Muller R., "Reformation, Orthodoxy, 'Christian Aristotelianism', and the Eclecticism of Early Modern Philosophy", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 81 (2001) 306–325.

schism. In fact, the composition of the image suggests that all the heresies following the Reformation stemmed from Protestantism.

De Hooghe presented the results of the *Public Preaching of the Word* in two equally disappointing categories: on the one hand, in new groups of uneducated believers under the spell of wicked clerical leaders; and, on the other hand, in sects with an undisciplined, stubborn and godless approach to religion. The first category we encounter in the upper left and lower right corner of etching 59. Both figures (D and E) stand for clerical leaders who, in an eloquent or less eloquent way, try to control the common faithful. Important in this image is that both the clerics and their followers are criticized: the clerics for taking advantage of their flock, and the believers for not using their own judgment.

In the upper right corner, we encounter the second category of heresy: the people who developed their own deviant ideas on religion. Figure H denotes the Anabaptists, probably the best known heretics of the period.⁵¹ De Hooghe represents them by a naked figure, under the name of *Spiritual Frenzy*. Carrying a torch of revolt and a ball as a symbol of their arrogant authority over heavens and earth, it is especially their civil disobedience that is displayed. Their heretical ideas are presented in a book crawling with snakes, referred to as the 'Wonderbook'.⁵² De Hooghe closely associates (the Anabaptist) *Spiritual Frenzy* with the most dangerous error of all, *The Sin against the Holy Spirit* (figure G). Touched by the 'light of Nature', this figure considers himself to be god.⁵³

The line of Reformation decay is even further extended in the next chapter, entitled *On the Apostate Reformation* [Van de Afvallige Hervorming] [Fig. 13]. A rich palette of all kinds of heresies is presented swarming over the image. Starting with figure A, in the lower left corner, De Hooghe represented a prostrate clairvoyant, wearing a star-studded robe, his head surrounded by hoops of stars [Fig. 14]. His heavenly experiences and lack

⁵¹ This image was also based on a Ripean example of 'Heresy'.

⁵² De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 425. With this Wonderbook De Hooghe refers to the title of a book that was published in 1542 in Deventer, by David Jorisz, one of the leaders of the Dutch Anabaptists.

⁵³ The 'light of nature' was a term used in Deist circles, referring to the tendency to reject the spiritual revelation (which also included the Bible) and put one's trust in human reason alone. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 410, 249. See Sorkin D., "William Warburton: The Middle Way of 'Heroic Moderation'", *Nederlandsch archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 82 (2002) 275. Related accusations were made against adherents of the philosophy of Descartes, who were blamed for propagating a theory that made man god. See Heyd M., *Be Sober and Reasonable. The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Brill Studies in Intellectual History 63 (Leiden: 1995) 125, 126, 129.



Fig. 13. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Van de Afvallige reformatie*. Etching from *Hieroglyphica of merkebeelden der oude volkeren, namentlyk Egyptenaren, Chaldeeuwen, Feniciers, Joden, Grieken, Romeynen, enz.: nevens een omstandig bericht van het verval en voortkruypende, verbastering der godsdiensten door verscheyde eeuwen; en eyndelyk de Hervorming, tot op deze tyden toe vervolgt* (Amsterdam, Joris van der Woude: 1735), plate 60. Private collection.



Fig. 14. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Ziender*. Detail of Fig. 13.

of 'down-to-earth' attitude symbolize the way many religious leaders pretended exaltation.⁵⁴ Next to this figure we find, again, naked Anabaptists, this time in a compromising pose pointing to their promiscuity [Fig. 15]. It is towards the anti-Trinitarian Socinians and the Pre-Adamites that De Hooghe is most critical. Socinianism [Fig. 16] is depicted with the face of a whore because of her sly temptation, crawling from a dark abyss, and tearing apart the Trinity (a triangle with the tetragrammaton).⁵⁵ The Pre-Adamites [Fig. 17], adherents of Isaac La Peyrère's theory that the human race existed prior to the creation of Adam and Eve, are symbolised by a figure spitting out fire and ashes against heaven. Above this figure we encounter his new world, already populated before Adam and Eve.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ It is not exactly clear which sect is indicated by De Hooghe, but several stories about spiritual leaders with special ecstatic experiences were going around at the time such as Antoinette de Bourignon and Sabathai Sevi.

⁵⁵ De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 429.

⁵⁶ Peyrère Isaac La, *Praeadamitae sive exercitatio super versibus duodecimo, decimotertio, & decimoquarto, capitis quinti Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanos* (Amsterdam, [L. & D.



Fig. 15. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Dopersen*. Detail of Fig. 13.



Fig. 16. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Socinianery*. Detail of Fig. 13.



Fig. 17. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Praedamytten*. Detail of Fig. 13.

It is this extensive attention to heresy that again brings to mind a similarity with the ideas of Gottfried Arnold, who also saw the history of religion as a process of decline. The radical pietist Arnold, however, recognised this decay first and foremost in the official clerical institutions and consequently adhered to the idea that only the small heretical groups epitomized the continuation of 'true' Christianity. I do think that De Hooghe's central approach of religion as a declining phenomenon was influenced by Arnold's ideas, on the one hand, because of the similarities in arguments of religious and even Reformation decline, and, on the other hand,

Elzevier]: 1655); De Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* 431; Asselt W.J. van, "Adam en Eva als laatkomers. De pre-adamitische speculaties van Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676)", in Goris H. – Hennecke S. (eds.), *Adam en Eva in het paradijs. Actuele visies op man en vrouw uit 2000 jaar christelijke theologie* (Zoetermeer: 2005) 99–115.

because of the similarities in textual descriptions.⁵⁷ Both authors indicate, either in text or in images, the failure of Luther's Reformation enterprise. Arnold utterly discredits the Reformation for the parsimonious attitude of the Protestant ministers, their discords and quarrels. Actually, Arnold declares, they are no different than the Catholic monks, with their grubbing and drinking; and with their lust for power, the Reformation for all practical purposes exchanged 'one pope for many little popes'.⁵⁸ The same kind of argument is found in De Hooghe's positioning of the Reformation as the outset of the sectarian fragmentation of the Christian church, still producing deceitful religious leaders and docile followers.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, De Hooghe's representation of the magisterial Reformation does not follow Arnold's concept as a whole, especially contradicting Arnold's positive view on heretics as the true heirs of early Christianity. De Hooghe regards all heresies – with the exception of the Jansenists (figure F), which he considered a great 'reformed' movement within the Catholic Church – as evil and schismatic movements, deceiving uneducated believers.

Concluding Remarks

Hieroglyphica is a significant example of the way imitation and alteration were no mere practical or aesthetic decisions, but indicated new meaning. De Hooghe based his hieroglyphic Reformation chapter on pre-existing images that he used as a recognizable basis for a context-defined re-interpretation of ecclesiastical history. This started with a visual scriptural interpretation of pruning, in which Catholic elements were adapted into Protestant versions. Further alterations were more critical, however, showing that De Hooghe regarded the Lutheran Reformation as no real improvement. He even went so far as to compare the state-supported magisterial Reformation with the expansion of Islam, suggesting that the forceful imposition of religious change and the wars of religion were no less violent than the policies of Muhammad and his successors. Surrounding this political Reformation with all kinds of heresies indicated

⁵⁷ De Hooghe titles chapter 60 *On the Apostate Reformation*, probably imitating Arnold's *On the Defectiveness of the Reformation*.

⁵⁸ Arnold, *Historie* II 292.

⁵⁹ Spaans, *Graphic Satire* 207.

the ultimate failure of the movement. Although influenced by Gottfried Arnold, De Hooghe chose a less blunt approach. Using the genre of hieroglyphs combined with interpictoriality, the images of *Hieroglyphica* provided meaning on different levels, and could truly be 'open' to the people aware of the inter pictorial references, but 'closed' to those who were not acquainted with De Hooghe's broader oeuvre.

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VII. PREFIGURATION AND TRANSFIGURATION

VASARI AND *THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST*:
CONVERGING THE TESTAMENTS AND COMPETING
WITH PREDECESSORS

Alexander Linke

Since the beginning of Christian theology, typology has been concerned with questions of generation and competition. Typological thinking emphasizes the theme of continuity in God's history of salvation, but this venerable exegetical method also means to demonstrate the superiority of the New Testament over the Old. Specifically, the basic concept defines stories, characters, and symbols of the Old Covenant as imperfect prophecies or mere promises that prefigured the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan by the accomplishments of Christ.¹ Moreover, Jesus himself sanctioned the method and conveyed the dualism of continuation and overcoming that is vital for the typological concept:

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.²

Nowadays, art historical scholarship rarely acknowledges the interconnections between typology and concepts of artistic competition or questions of generations. This is hardly surprising, considering the fact that the majority of typological programs were conceived as a whole and their execution was predominantly the responsibility of a single artist. Only Vasari reports a unique, but important precedent, where typology is associated with artistic competition:³

¹ On the genesis of typology, see Auerbach E., "Figura", in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: 1959) 11–79. For a survey of the patristic understanding of biblical typology, see Daniélou J., *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in Biblical Typology of the Fathers* (London: 1960).

² *John* 6:48–51.

³ I gratefully owe this argument to Gerd Blum, who speaks in regards to the decoration of the Sistine Chapel of two typological modes: the iconographic and the paragonal; see Blum G., "Gesamtgeschichtliches Erzählen am Beginn der Frühen Neuzeit", in Blum G. – Bogen S. – Ganz D. – Rimmel M. (eds.), *Pendant Plus. Praktiken der Bildkombinatorik* (Berlin: 2012) 131–153.

When the day arrived on which the works of all were to be unveiled, that of Cosimo was seen with the rest, and was scorned and ridiculed with much laughter and jeering by all the other craftsmen, who all mocked him instead of having compassion on him. But the scorners turned out to be the scorned, for, as Cosimo had foreseen, those colors at the first glance so dazzled the eyes of the Pope, who had little knowledge of such things, although he took no little delight in them, that he judged the work of Cosimo to be much better than that of the others.⁴

However, Vasari's assessment of the decorative campaign is tendentious. By contrast, early sources (for example, the contract and estimate for the lateral frescoes) indicate that the artists worked in close cooperation and jointly took full responsibility for the scheduled completion of the decoration.⁵ That is to say, the fictive anecdote of the artistic competition is a simple literary device to reinforce the impression of the stupendous painterly quality.⁶ The same is true when Vasari interprets Michelangelo's (1475–1564) *Sistine Ceiling* and the *Last Judgment* not merely as an iconographic supplement to the older decoration, but as a masterpiece of artistic competition through which Michelangelo demonstrated his superiority over the art of his predecessors from the Quattrocento:

Wherefore, when this Judgment was thrown open to view, it proved that he [that is, Michelangelo] had not only vanquished all the earlier masters who had worked there, but had sought to surpass the vaulting that he himself

⁴ Quoted from the Life of Cosimo Rosselli (Vasari G., *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters Sculptors & Architects* by Giorgio Vasari, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere, 10 vols. [London: 1912–1915] III 188–189); 'Venuto il giorno che si dovevano l'opera di tutti scoprire, fu veduta ancora la sua, e con molte risa e motti da tutti gl'altri artefici schernita e beffata, uccellandolo tutti in cambio d'avergli compassione. Ma gli scherniti finalmente furono essi, perciò che que' colori, sì come si era Cosimo imaginato, a un tratto così abbagliarono gl'occhi del Papa, che non molto s'intendeva di simili cose ancora che se ne diletasse assai, che giudicò Cosimo avere molto meglio che tutti gl'altri operato' (Vasari G., *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. R. Bettarini – P. Barocchi, 6 vols. (Florence: 1966–1988) III 445). All references to Vasari's *Vite* refer to the second edition, from 1568, the so-called *Giuntina*.

⁵ On the genesis and iconography of the Quattrocento decoration of the Sistine Chapel, see Linke A., *Typologie in der Frühen Neuzeit. Genese und Semantik heilsgeschichtlicher Bildprogramme von der Cappella Sistina (1480) bis San Giovanni in Laterano (1650)* (Berlin: 2014). For a transcription of the early sources regarding the commission of the decoration, see Steinmann E., *Die Sixtinische Kapelle. Teil 1: Bau und Schmuck der Kapelle unter Sixtus IV.*, 2 vols. (Munich: 1901) I 633–634.

⁶ On the origins of artistic competitions that soon became a popular topic in early modern art literature, see Middeldorf Kosegarten A., "The Origins of Artistic Competition in Italy (Forms of Competition between Artists before the Contest for the Florentine Baptistery Doors Won by Ghiberti in 1401)", in *Lorenzo Ghiberti nel suo tempo*, 2 vols. (Florence: 1988) I 167–186.

had made so famous, excelling it by a great measure and outstripping his own self.⁷

With the sharp remark on Michelangelo's overpowering performance in the Sistine Chapel, Vasari once again plays on the *topos* of artistic competition, but widens it suggestively towards a competition between artists of different generations. The statement corresponds perfectly with Vasari's general conception of the historical progress of art. Vasari recognized the competitive approach of the younger generation to be the driving force for any artistic improvement.⁸ Moreover, as Gerd Blum had pointed out with striking clarity, Vasari conceived the first edition of the *Vite* (1550) in steps of artistic achievements (the 'progresso della [...] rinascita') that resembled the typological structure of the three biblical Ages of salvation *ante legem* – *sub lege* – *sub gratia* (nature, law, grace).⁹ This typological pattern of progress leads ultimately to the 'somma grazia' (highest grace, and loveliness) that the Cinquecento – the era of Raphael, Leonardo, and Michelangelo – has reached.¹⁰

*Matching Raphael's Transfiguration of Christ:
Vasari in S. Pietro in Montorio*

The question of generation and competition is not just a literary device. It is also the underlying theme of Vasari's own biography. In 1550, Giorgio Vasari, already thirty-nine years old, had recently published the first edition of the *Vite*. However, the vast majority of protagonists in his history of art had died a long time ago. Among those his greatest champions: Luca Signorelli (1441–1523), Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), and Raphael

⁷ Quoted from the Life of Michelangelo (Vasari, *Lives* IX 58); 'Onde, scoperto questo Giudizio, mostrò non solo essere vincitore de' primi artefici che lavorato vi avevano, ma ancora nella volta, ch'egli tanto celebrata avea fatta, volse vincere sé stesso' (Vasari, *Vite* VI 71).

⁸ On Vasari's thoughts on competition and artistic progress, see Clifton J., "Vasari on Competition", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (1996) 23–41.

⁹ See Blum G., "Provvidenza e progresso. La teologia della storia nelle 'Vite' vasariane, con alcune considerazioni su periodizzazione e paginatura nell'*Torrentiniana*", in Burzer K. – Davis C. – Feser S. – Nova A. (eds.), *Le Vite del Vasari. Genesi, topoi, ricezione* (Venice: 2010) 131–152; Blum G., "Zur Geschichtstheologie von Vasaris *Vite* (1550). Kunstgeschichte als 'große Erzählung' und Bildsystem", in Thürlmann F. – Ganz D. (eds.), *Das Bild im Plural. Mehrteilige Bildformen zwischen Mittelalter und Gegenwart* (Berlin: 2010) 271–288. For the notion 'progresso della [...] rinascita', see Vasari, *Vite* II 31.

¹⁰ See for instance the Life of Michelangelo (Vasari, *Vite* III 230).

(1483–1520), all dead for more than a quarter of a century. Sebastiano del Piombo (1485–1547) had died just three years earlier, at the age of sixty-two. Only Michelangelo was still alive at the age of seventy-five. In other words, Vasari wrote in a post-Renaissance era that made him a successor to a glorious generation of artists and an heir to their high aesthetic standards.¹¹ But the general question of how to proceed after the celebrated achievements through individual performances of these Renaissance artists had also a more personal dimension. This becomes clear due to the fact that Vasari struggled in his early years to establish himself as a painter. Whereas Michelangelo in his thirties triumphantly finished such monumental projects as the *Sistine Ceiling*, Vasari – unlike all his admired predecessors – was more of a migrant artist, lacking any continual patronage, and was left to pursue various minor commissions in Tuscany, Naples, and Rome.¹² Consequently, in the eyes of Vasari the election of his former patron Giovanni Maria del Monte (1487–1555) to the papacy as Julius III in February 1550 finally provided a promising opportunity for the development of his own career. He turned his attention enthusiastically towards Rome, anticipating that fate – at last – might change in his favor at the papal court:

the news came that the Cardinal had become Julius III. Whereupon I mounted straightway on horseback and went to Florence, whence, pressed by the Duke, I went to Rome, in order to be present at the coronation of the new Pontiff and to take part in the preparation of the festivities. And so, arriving in Rome and dismounting at the house of Messer Bindo, I went to do reverence to his Holiness and to kiss his feet.¹³

Soon after Giovanni Maria del Monte was crowned to be the new Pontiff, he decided to commission from Vasari an elaborate funeral chapel in S. Pietro in Montorio, commemorating his grandfather Fabiano (1421–98) and his uncle Cardinal Antonio del Monte (d. 1533).¹⁴ Vasari informs us

¹¹ On the biography of Vasari, see Blum G., *Giorgio Vasari. Der Erfinder der Renaissance* (Munich: 2011) 82–116, who pays particular attention to Vasari's retrospective make-up of the Renaissance.

¹² Blum, *Giorgio Vasari* 106–143.

¹³ Quoted from the Life of Vasari (Vasari, *Lives* X 205); '[...] venne nuova che il detto cardinale era diventato Giulio Terzo. Per che, montato subito a cavallo, venni a Fiorenza, donde, sollecitato dal Duca, andai a Roma per esservi alla coronazione di detto nuovo Pontefice et al fare dell'apparato. E così giunto in Roma e scavalcato a casa messer Bindo, andai a far reverenza e baciare il piè a Sua Santità' (Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VI, 369).

¹⁴ On the Del Monte Chapel in S. Pietro in Montorio, see Satkowski L., *Giorgio Vasari. Architect and Courtier* (Princeton: 1993) 13–18. On the artistic patronage of Julius III, with particular regards to the secular buildings he commissioned, see Nova A., *The Artistic*

that he signed a contract in early June 1550.¹⁵ From this document, it is clear that Vasari was the responsible artist for the entire commission and that he needed to conclude the chapel's decoration within thirty months. Furthermore, the young Tuscan Bartolommeo Ammanati (1511–92) was appointed to carve the tomb sculptures.¹⁶ Above all, the whole project was supposed to remain under the supervision of Michelangelo, who had been involved in the planning right from the start and had fixed Vasari's salary in advance.¹⁷ It is obvious that the Pope believed Buonarroti's involvement would guarantee the success of the project. Whether Del Monte had initially hoped to have the entire project executed by Michelangelo is rather unlikely. During this period, the aged painter, sculptor, and architect was just about to put an end to his seven-year encounter with the two frescoes in the Cappella Paolina: the *Conversion of St. Paul* [Fig. 1] and the *Crucifixion of St. Peter*.¹⁸ In addition, the genesis of the Paolina frescoes overlapped with the closing chapter of the 'tragedy of the Julius Tomb'¹⁹ – a work that kept him busy for at least four decades. Neither the actual Pope, nor Michelangelo himself, could have ever wanted to repeat such a long-lasting occupation with the new project in S. Pietro in Montorio. Thus, the natural choice would be the swiftly working Vasari, who had already proven his ability to handle a larger commission even on short term assignment, as for example with the decoration of the *Sala dei Cento Giorni* in 1546.²⁰

Patronage of Pope Julius III (1550–1555): Profane Imagery and Buildings for the De Monte Family in Rome (New York – London: 1988).

¹⁵ For analysis of this contract see, Nova A., "The Chronology of the De Monte Chapel in S. Pietro in Montorio in Rome", *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984) 150–154.

¹⁶ On the work of Bartolommeo Ammanati, see Pope-Hennessy J., *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture* (London: 1970) 367–377.

¹⁷ Vasari himself informs us that Michelangelo fixed the price (Vasari, *Vite* VI 82).

¹⁸ For a concise summary with detailed record of the literature concerning these frescoes, see Zöllner F. – Thoenes C. – Pöpper T., *Michelangelo 1475–1564. Das vollständige Werk* (Cologne: 2007) 464–466; see also the comprehensive study by Steinberg L., *Michelangelo's Last Paintings. The Conversion of St. Paul and the Crucifixion of St. Peter in the Cappella Paolina, Vatican Palace* (London: 1975).

¹⁹ Condivi A., *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. G. Nencioni (Florence: 1998) 36. On the Julius Tomb, see Echinger-Maurach C., *Michelangelos Grabmal für Papst Julius II* (Munich: 2009).

²⁰ See Blum, *Giorgio Vasari* 124–129; Grasso M., "La sala dei Cento Giorni di Giorgio Vasari: Il programma iconografico e la politica dinastica farnesiana", *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 76 (2003/04) 175–191.

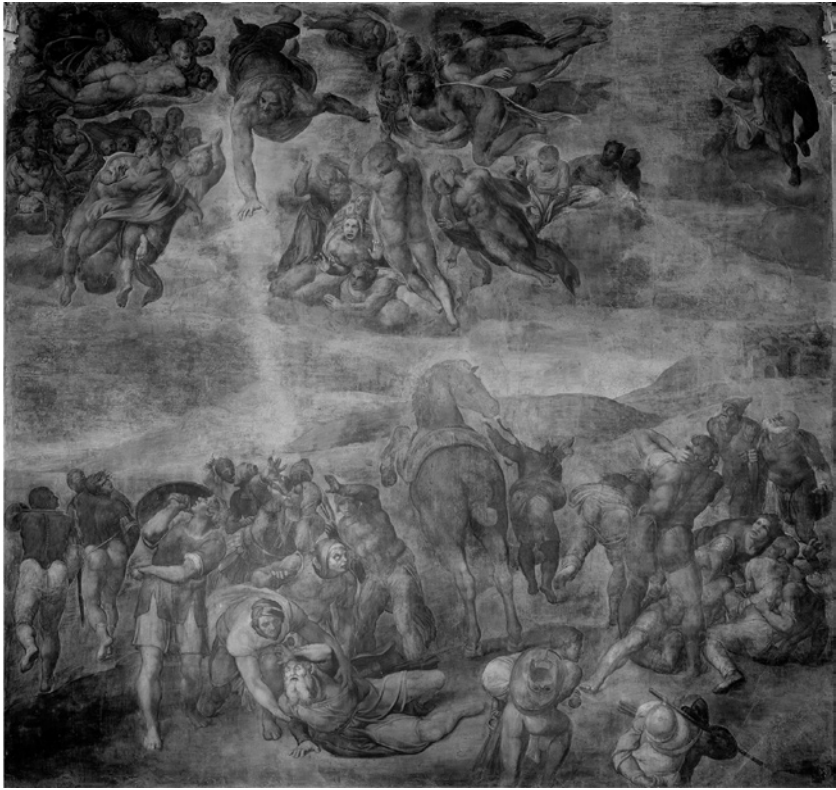


Fig. 1. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Conversion of St. Paul* (1542–49). Fresco. Rome, Vatican Palace, Cappella Paolina.

As early designs indicate, Vasari envisioned a colorful synthesis of architecture, sculpture, and painting for the chapel in S. Pietro.²¹ According to Leon Satkowski, an early intervention by Michelangelo led to a radical revision of the project's architecture: 'All carved decoration, which would distract from the figures in the niches, was to be eliminated'.²² Moreover, the proposed Corinthian columns were replaced by Ionic ones, which finally supported a double-layered aedicula to highlight the central altarpiece [Fig. 2].²³

²¹ For the drawings by Vasari for the initial schemes, see Morrogh A. (ed.), *Disegni di architetti fiorentini. 1540–1640* (Florence: 1985) 31–33.

²² Satkowski, *Giorgio Vasari* 16.

²³ It has been recognized that the double-layered aedicula resembled a famous motif, introduced by Michelangelo in the reading room of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (Florence); see Blum, *Giorgio Vasari* 171.

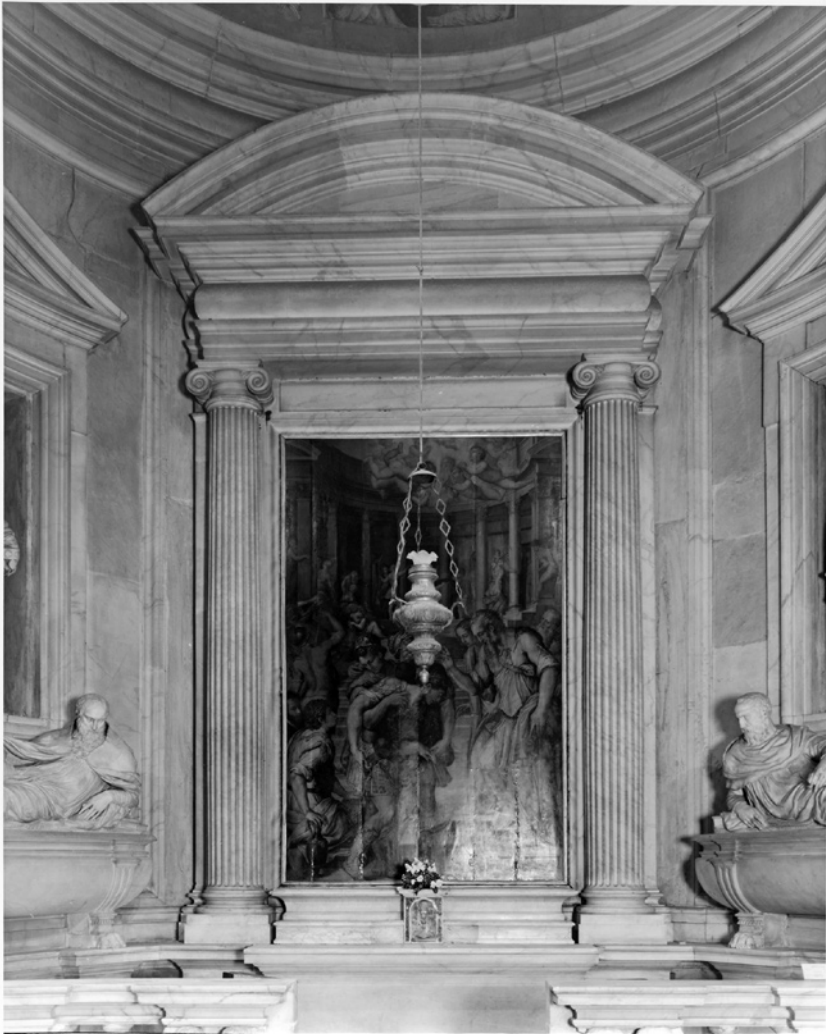


Fig. 2. View of the Del Monte Chapel with the altarpiece by Giorgio Vasari. Rome, San Pietro in Montorio.

In regards to this particular altarpiece for the Del Monte Chapel, Vasari became entangled in one of the legendary competitions in the history of art: specifically, the dual commission of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici for two altarpieces destined for the cathedral of Saint Juste in Narbonne,²⁴ of which the famous *Transfiguration* by Raphael [Fig. 3],²⁵ however, had never reached its projected home. Instead, it had been mounted shortly after Raphael's death (1520) on the high altar of S. Pietro in Montorio.²⁶ Ironically, in 1516 Sebastiano del Piombo, whose *Raising of Lazarus* [Fig. 4] was indeed shipped to Narbonne, had already set up a fresco depicting the *Flagellation of Christ* [Fig. 5] in the so-called Borgherini Chapel, which is also located in S. Pietro.²⁷ He continued with the decoration of this chapel after the death of Raphael and superposed his fresco likewise with a *Transfiguration* in the bowl-shaped vault [Fig. 6], thereby designating the *Flagellation* below as a substitute for the *Rising of Lazarus* and provoking the viewer to compare it instead with Raphael's altarpiece. Vasari gives a brief report on this fresco:

Wherefore Pier Francesco Borgherini, a Florentine merchant, who had taken over a chapel in S. Pietro in Montorio, which is on the right as one enters the church, allotted it at the suggestion of Michelagnolo to Sebastiano, because Borgherini thought that Michelagnolo would execute the design of the whole work, as indeed he did. Sebastiano, therefore, having set to work, executed it with such zeal and diligence, that it was held to be, as it is, a very beautiful piece of painting.²⁸

²⁴ On the dual commission of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici and the competition between Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo, see Preimesberger R., "Tragic Motifs in Raphael's *Transfiguration*", in Preimesberger R., *Paragons and Paragone: Van Eyck, Raphael, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini* (Los Angeles: 2011) 1–22; Goffen R., *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian* (New Haven – London: 2002) 246–255; Brassat W., *Das Historienbild im Zeitalter der Eloquenz. Von Raffael bis Le Brun* (Berlin: 2003) 72–81.

²⁵ On Raphael's *Transfiguration* and a detailed record of the literature, see Meyer zur Capellen J., *Raphael. A Critical Catalogue of His Paintings II: The Roman Religious Paintings, ca. 1508–1520* (Landshut: 2005) 195–209.

²⁶ Meyer zur Capellen, *Raphael* 196.

²⁷ On the decoration of the Borgherini Chapel and the *Raising of Lazarus*, see Scandiani G. (ed.), *Sebastiano del Piombo: 1485–1547* (Milan: 2008) cat. nos. 15, 33.

²⁸ Quoted from the Life of Sebastiano del Piombo (Vasari, *Lives* VI 175); 'Per che, avendo Pierfrancesco Borgherini, mercante fiorentino, preso una cappella in San Piero in Montorio, entrando in chiesa a man ritta, ella fu col favor di Michelagnolo allogata a Sebastiano, perché il Borgherino pensò, come fu vero, che Michelagnolo dovesse far egli il disegno di tutta l'opera. Messovi dunque mano, la condusse con tanta diligenza e studio Sebastiano, ch'ella fu tenuta et è bellissima pittura' (Vasari, *Vite* V 89).



Fig. 3. Raphael, *Transfiguration of Christ* (1520). Panel, 405 × 278 cm. Originally on the high altar of S. Pietro in Montorio (Rome); now: Rome, Vatican Palace, Pinacoteca Vaticana.

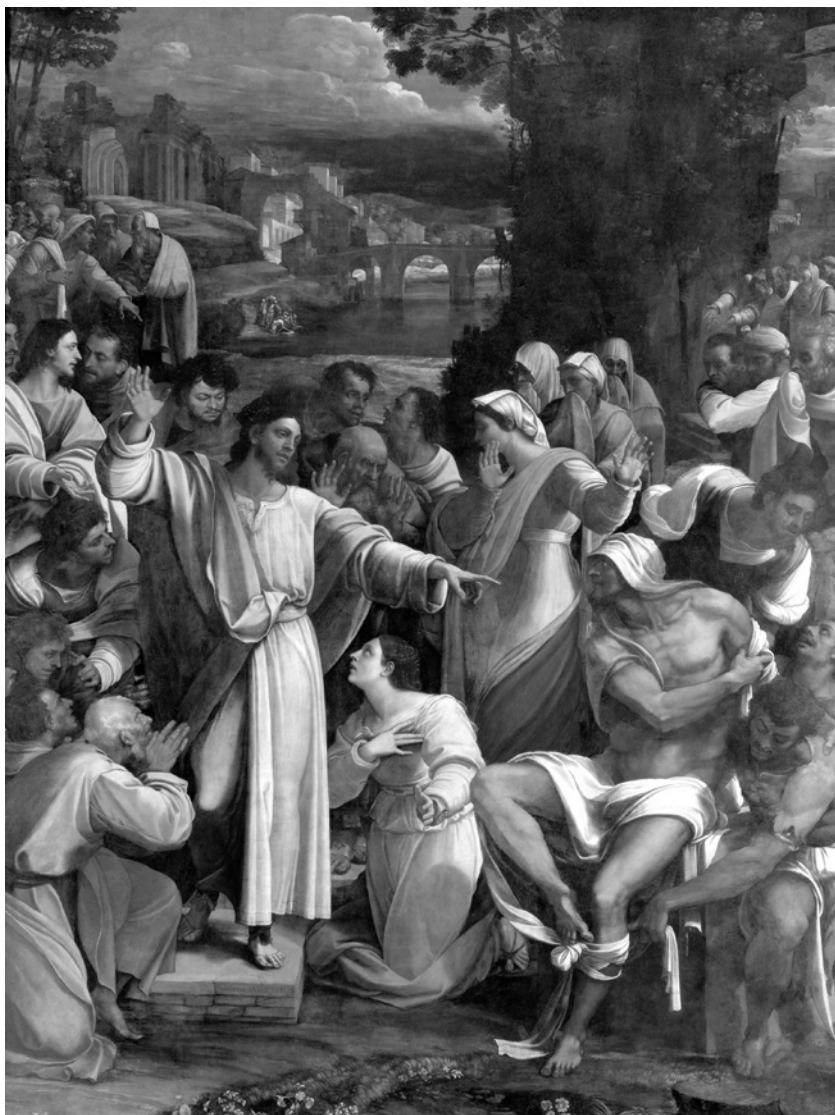


Fig. 4. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Raising of Lazarus* (1517–19). Canvas, 381 × 289.6 cm. London, National Gallery.



Fig. 5. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Flagellation of Christ* (1519). Fresco. Rome, San Pietro in Montorio.



Fig. 6. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Transfiguration of Christ* (1524). Fresco. Rome, San Pietro in Montorio.

Here, Vasari presents us with the idea that Del Piombo was a mere proxy of Michelangelo and hardly an artist in its own right.²⁹ According to the illuminating study of Rudolf Preimesberger, the particular rivalry between Raphael and Sebastiano ‘was in truth a *paragone* of the opposing trends in modern Italian painting, epitomized in the work of Raphael and Michelangelo. [...] The dark, philosophically inclined figure of Michelangelo is linked with notions such as *difficoltà*, *gravità*, *asprezza*, *durezza* – as opposed to the painter, Raphael, whose art and life are described in terms of qualities of the medium of painting: *grazia*, *facilità*, *ornato*, *varietà*.’³⁰ Vasari himself praised the *Transfiguration* particularly in regards to the variety of ‘figures and heads’.³¹ In addition, he thought of Raphael as an

²⁹ Modern criticism has emphasized that this does not mean annulling Sebastiano's independence as an artist; on the contrary, when re-elaborating the maestro's ideas, Sebastiano always included in his own creations an elevated and personal stylistics; see Scandiani, *Sebastiano del Piombo* 172.

³⁰ Preimesberger, ‘Tragic Motifs’ 5.

³¹ See the Life of Raphael (Vasari, *Vite* IV, 203).

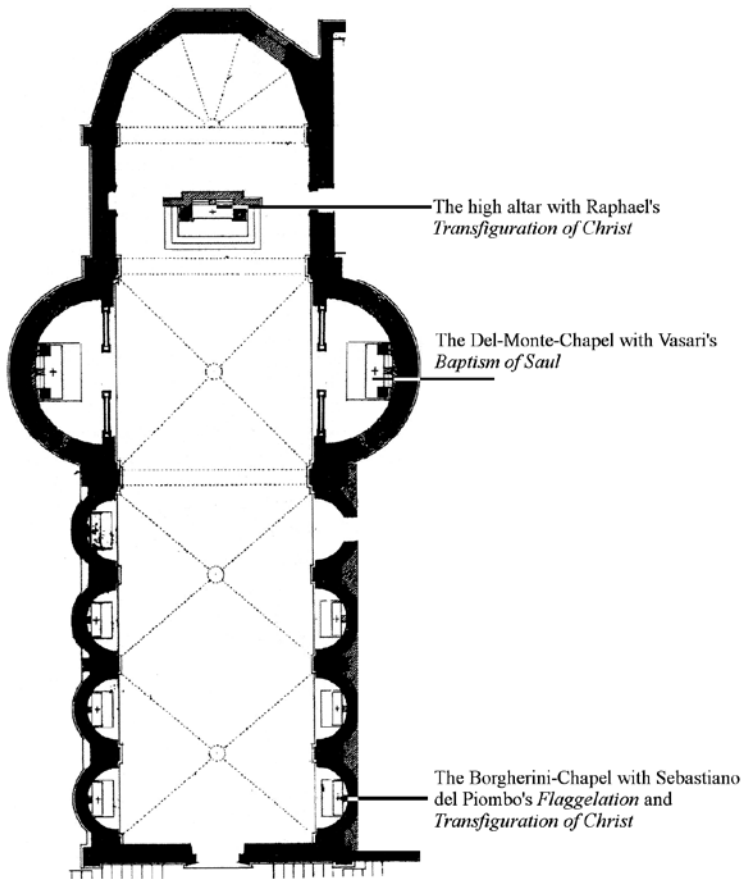


Fig. 7. Plan of San Pietro in Montorio (Rome), indicating the works of Raphael, Vasari, and Sebastiano.

anti-michelangelesque artist, who asserts his superiority by means of his *universalità*.³²

By taking over the commission, Vasari finds himself in the middle of this highly profiled rivalry – seeing his own chapel sandwiched between Raphael's *Transfiguration*, the altarpiece of the adjacent main apse, and Del Piombo's *Flagellation of Christ* in the Borgherini Chapel at the end of the nave [Fig. 7]. Above all, Michelangelo had determined the subject matter of Vasari's altarpiece in accordance with the Pope. Just as Michelangelo had

³² Ibidem 206.

previously provided Sebastiano with ideas and studies, now he demanded that Vasari should copy his most recent invention, the *Conversion of St. Paul* in the Cappella Paolina. The subject itself – a scene of heavenly punishment and conversion through faith – was well suited for the Del Monte Chapel, as it alludes to the doctrinal challenge by Protestantism that Julius III had faced as a papal legate and president of the Council of Trent.³³ Unfortunately, the explicit nature of Michelangelo's involvement did not improve Vasari's situation. Quite to the contrary, the ambitious young artist was not only to face the most renowned altarpiece by the distinguished Raphael, but was also set to execute designs by Michelangelo. His guidance, however, had not prevented the former contender Sebastiano del Piombo from losing the competition with Raphael. Vasari reflects in a brief account of his own life on this rather uncomfortable situation and his aim to liberate himself from the paternalism of Michelangelo:

And meanwhile I painted the altar-picture of that chapel, in which I represented the Conversion of S. Paul, but, to vary it from that which Buonarroti had executed in the Pauline Chapel, I made S. Paul young, as he himself writes, and fallen from his horse, and led blind by the soldiers to Ananias, from whom by the imposition of hands he receives the lost sight of his eyes, and is baptized; in which work, either because the space was restricted, or whatever may have been the reason, I did not satisfy myself completely, although it was perhaps not displeasing to others, and in particular to Michelagnolo.³⁴

What remained unsaid in this passage, but was soon discovered by art historians,³⁵ is that the slight alteration of the subject (from punishment to healing) allowed Vasari to conceive his painting [Fig. 8] as a companion to Raphael's *Transfiguration*, both in form and symbol. For once, he repeated precisely the dimensions of the picture and imitated the general structure of Raphael's composition. In fact, he divided the scenery in an upper and lower part, placing a large congregation in the lower section and

³³ See Gombrich E.H., "The Ecclesiastical Significance of Raphael's Transfiguration", in Chrościcki J.A. – Cieślińska N. (eds.), *Ars auro prior: Studia Ioanni Białostocki sexagenario dicata* (Warsaw: 1981) 241–243.

³⁴ Quoted from the Life of Vasari (Vasari, *Lives* X 206); '[...] et intanto io feci la tavola di quella cappella, dove dipinsi la Conversione di S. Paulo; ma per variare da quello che avea fatto il Buonarruoto nella Paulina, feci S. Paulo, come egli scrive, giovane, che già cascato da cavallo è condotto dai soldati ad Anania, cieco, dal quale per imposizione delle mani riceve il lume degl'occhi perduto et è battezzato. Nella quale opera, o per la strettezza del luogo, o altro che ne fusse cagione, non sodisfeci interamente a me stesso, se bene forse ad altri non dispiacque, et in particolare a Michelagnolo' (Vasari, *Vite* VI 396).

³⁵ See Satkowski, *Giorgio Vasari* 17; Blum, *Giorgio Vasari* 170.



Fig. 8. Giorgio Vasari, *Baptism of Saul* (1550). Panel, 369 × 262 cm. Rome, San Pietro in Montorio.

flooding the scenery with divine light from the top. By comparing Vasari's first sketch of the *Baptism of Saul* [Fig. 9] to the completed altarpiece, one recognizes the gradually increasing influence of Raphael's prototype. It is only in the first version of this painting that Vasari envisioned an overcrowded scene with a slightly oblique perspective, placing the source of heavenly light in the upper-right corner. In the latter, though, he deliberately stabilized the composition by shifting the luminous source of divine grace more towards the upper center of the image. In addition, he richly individualized the figures in the foreground, meaning to emulate the various postures of Raphael's highly affected apostles. Second, something of Vasari's intense intellectual engagement with the theme of Christ's *Transfiguration* may be sensed from the fact that Vasari's genuine emphasis on Saul's healing through the belief in the divine origin of Christ was intended to match Raphael's *Transfiguration* in terms of iconography. In the Synoptic Gospels (*Matthew* 17:1–9, *Mark* 9:2–8, *Luke* 9:28–36) the Transfiguration is described as the miraculous epiphany of Christ.³⁶ It sets up a series of further miracles (for example, the coin in the fish's mouth, *Matthew* 17:24–27, and the raising of Lazarus, *John* 11:1–44) through which Christ gave signs of his divine glory. Besides, Raphael as well acknowledges the connection between Christ's enlightenment and its effect on human nature by combining the scene on Mount Tabor with the healing of the possessed boy (*Mark* 9:14–29, *Matthew* 17:14–21, *Luke* 9:37–49). Naturally, the *Baptism of Saul* is also regarded as one of Christ's miracles – a miracle that completed the transformation of the pagan centurion to one of Christ's most powerful apostles. Interestingly, the combination of the transformation of the believer and the Transfiguration of Christ received much attention in Saint Paul's own theological writing. As Simon S. Lee demonstrated in his analysis of 2 *Corinthians* 3, 'Paul understands Jesus' glorification in the light of his suffering and death', and Jesus 'enables those who see his glory to be transformed in the same glory'.³⁷ The far-reaching theological significance of Christ's Transfiguration is also acknowledged by Sebastiano's superposition of his *Flagellation* fresco by a *Transfiguration* of his own. Here the *Flagellation* is viewed as a complement to the event on Mount Tabor, after

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, for instance, calls it the 'greatest miracle'; for full analysis of the medieval patristic thinking on Christ's Transfiguration, see Canty A., *Light & Glory: The Transfiguration of Christ in Early Franciscan and Dominican Theology* (Washington, D.C.: 2011).

³⁷ See Lee S.S., *Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believers' Transformation: A Study of the Transfiguration and Its Development in Early Christian Writings* (Tübingen: 2009) 90.



Fig. 9. Giorgio Vasari, *Baptism of Saul* (modello, 1550). Panel, 60 × 43.5 cm. Greenville (South Carolina), Bob Jones University Museum.

which, according to *Matthew* 17:22–23, Jesus ‘announced’ his passion and death – just when He had already taken the form of the crucified.³⁸

There can be no mistaking the fact that Raphael’s *Transfiguration* received an iconic status immediately after the artist’s death. It was soon epitomized as a symbol of artistic rivalry and became a model for generations of artists.³⁹ In this perspective, it plays a pivotal role within the decoration of S. Pietro in Montorio, outlining a meshwork of artistic rivalry that connects Vasari with his admired predecessors: Raphael, Sebastiano, and Michelangelo. In addition, the subject matter of Raphael’s famous altarpiece serves a distinctive unifying purpose within the realm of biblical iconography. The luminous *Transfiguration* mediates by means of iconographic cross-references within a diverse field of subjects, which extended uncoordinated over the last thirty years in S. Pietro in Montorio. This coalescing power of the *Transfiguration* surpasses its traditional typological codification by far. In the *Biblia pauperum*, for instance, the subject is simply combined with *Abraham Entertaining the Three Angels* and *The Three Young Men in the Fiery Furnace*.⁴⁰

Having examined the history of Vasari’s first papal commission, new light is shed on his understanding of ‘Christ’s Transfiguration’. He recognized it as a subject that received its definitive interpretation by the hand of Raphael – in a situation that was already regarded as one of the classic artistic rivalries throughout the entire history of art. Additionally, the universal quality of the motif left a deep impression on Vasari. In fact, he returns to the subject of the Transfiguration on several occasions in which he was (1) in need of a subject that connects his own scheme of decoration with one already established at the site and (2) facing simultaneously one of his admired predecessors in a mode of artistic competition. Two further examples will answer this hypothesis.

Transgressing Rooms: Vasari and Luca Signorelli in Cortona

The first example is staged in the Tuscan city of Cortona. In 1498, the lay brothers of the local Compagnia del Buon Gesù commissioned the con-

³⁸ ‘The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day’ (*Matthew* 17:22–23).

³⁹ See Göttler C., ‘“Barocke” Inszenierung eines Renaissance-Stücks: Peter Paul Rubens’ Transfiguration für Santissima Trinità in Mantua’, in Göttler C. – Müller Hofstede U. – Patz K. – Zollikofer K. (eds.), *Diletto e Maraviglia: Ausdruck und Wirkung in der Kunst von der Renaissance bis zum Barock* (Emsdetten: 1998) 166–189.

⁴⁰ See Henry A., *Biblia Pauperum: A Facsimile and Edition* (Aldershot: 1987) 71.



Fig. 10. Luca Signorelli, *Communion of the Apostles* (1512). Panel, 233 × 220 cm. Cortona, Museo diocesano.

struction of a new church and oratory. The church, which was consecrated in 1505, was situated in the upper floor of the new building, while the lower house consisted of the oratory. Around 1512, the brothers commissioned from Luca Signorelli three altarpieces, among them the *Communion of the Apostles* [Fig. 10].⁴¹ According to Vasari, the marvelous painting, which is commonly regarded as a masterpiece of Signorelli's final period, adorned

⁴¹ On the three altarpieces (*Communion of the Apostles*, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, and *Allegory of the Immaculate Conception*) by Luca Signorelli, see Kanter L.B., *Luca Signorelli. The Complete Paintings* (London: 2001) cat nos. 102, 114, 139.



Fig. 11. View of the Oratory of the Compagnia del Buon Gesù in Cortona, now part of the Museo diocesano.

the high altar of the church in the upper floor.⁴² Towards the end of 1554, Vasari was involved in the architectural design of the so-called Chiesa Nuova, a church that was built on a hill just outside the city walls.⁴³ Simultaneously, Vasari received a commission from the previously mentioned company of lay brothers to decorate their oratory [Fig. 11], situated on the lower floor, underneath the church with the altarpiece by Signorelli.⁴⁴ Vasari described the circumstances of this commission thusly:

I went to spend two months between Arezzo and Cortona, partly to give completion to some affairs of my own, and partly to finish a work in fresco begun on the walls and vaulting of the Company of Jesus at Cortona. In that place I painted three stories of the life of Jesus Christ, and all the sacrifices

⁴² See the Life of Luca Signorelli: 'E nella Compagnia del Gesù nella medesima città fece tre tavole, delle quali quella ch'è allo altar maggiore è maravigliosa, dove Cristo comunica gl'Apostoli e Giuda si mette l'ostia nella scarsella.' (Vasari, *Vite* III 635).

⁴³ On the church, see Matracchi P., *Giorgio Vasari e altri autori nella fabbrica di Santa Maria Nuova a Cortona* (Cortona: 1998).

⁴⁴ See Corsi J., "La decorazione dell'oratorio inferiore del Gesù", in Bruschetti P. (ed.), *Museo Diocesano* (Cortona: 2007) 43–49; Girolami Cheney L. de, "Giorgio Vasari's Oratory of the Compagnia del Gesù at Cortona", in Zirpolo L.H. (ed.), *The Chapels of Italy from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Centuries: Art, Religion, Patronage, and Identity* (Woodcliff Lake, NJ: 2011) 209–230.

offered to God in the Old Testament, from Cain and Abel down to the Prophet Nehemiah; and there, during that time, I also furnished designs and models for the fabric of the Madonna Nuova, without the city.⁴⁵

Despite his parallel effort in Cortona, Vasari managed to complete the extensive decoration of the oratory in the course of 1555. According to his records, he was able to do so only because his assistant Christofano Gherardi executed the frescoes. Vasari, on the other hand, limited his own work to some sketching [Fig. 12] and touching up:

However, he [Vasari] did not succeed in being able to rest during that time, for the reason that he could not refuse to go in those days to Cortona, where he painted in fresco the vaulting and the walls of the Company of Jesus with the assistance of Cristofano, who acquitted himself very well, and particularly in the twelve different sacrifices from the Old Testament which they executed in the lunettes between the spandrels of the vaulting. Indeed, to speak more exactly, almost the whole of this work was by the hand of Cristofano, Vasari having done nothing therein beyond making certain sketches, designing some parts on the plaster, and then retouching it at times in various places, according as it was necessary.⁴⁶

By inspecting the series of the twelve prophets [Fig. 13], each kneeling in front of an altar, one can easily recognize that they are simple variations of a single prototype. Consequently, the efficiency of this endeavor is based on the division of labor and the standardized, even serial, production as well.

Unlike in standard typological thinking, the sacrifices of the Old Covenant on the walls and the New Testament scenes on the ceiling are not related in terms of type and antitype. None of the three episodes depicted

⁴⁵ Quoted from the Life of Vasari (Vasari, *Lives* X 208–209); '[...] andai a starmi due mesi fra Arezzo e Cortona, parte per dar fine ad alcuni miei bisogni, e parte per fornire un lavoro in fresco cominciato in Cortona nelle facciate e volta della Compagnia del Gesù. Nel qual luogo feci tre istorie della vita di Gesù Cristo, e tutti i sacrificii stati fatti a Dio nel Vecchio Testamento, da Caino et Abel infino a Nemìa profeta; dove anche in quel mentre accomodai di modelli e disegni la fabrica della Madonna Nuova fuor della città' (Vasari, *Vite* VI 398).

⁴⁶ Quoted from the Life of Christofano Gherardi (Vasari, *Lives* VII 137–138); 'Ma non gli venne fatto di potere in detto tempo riposarsi, con ciò sia che non poté mancare di non andare in detto tempo a Cortona, dove nella Compagnia del Gesù dipinse la volta e le facciate in fresco insieme con Cristofano, che si portò molto bene, e massimamente in dodici sacrificii variati del Testamento Vecchio, i quali fecero nelle lunette fra i peducci delle volte. Anzi, per meglio dire, fu quasi tutta questa opera di mano di Cristofano, non avendovi fatto il Vasari che certi schizzi, disegnato alcune cose sopra la calcina e poi ritocco talvolta alcuni luoghi, secondo che bisognava' (Vasari, *Vite* III 300–301).



Fig. 12. Giorgio Vasari, *Sacrifice of Aaron* (1555). Ink on Paper, 22.1 × 15.5 cm. Florence, Gabinetto dei disegni e delle stampe degli Uffizi (no. 7084F).



Fig. 13. Cristofano Gherardi (after Vasari), *Sacrifices of Aaron, Samuel, and Moses* (1555). Fresco. Cortona, Oratory of the Compagnia del Buon Gesù, now part of the Museo diocesano.

on the vault – *Christ in Limbo*, the *Conversion of St. Paul* and most prominently the *Transfiguration of Christ* [Figs. 14–16] – can be associated directly with the offerings of the prophets. Nevertheless, Vasari had good reason to choose these subjects, which can be interpreted as symbols of the transition between the Old and New Testament.⁴⁷ As stated before, this is true for the *Conversion of St. Paul*, who was by the revelation of Christ's glory transformed into one of His most powerful apostles.⁴⁸ A further transition is indicated by the *Recovery of the Unbaptized from Limbo*. Christ himself reaches out, liberating those who believed in the afterlife or foretold his coming. Here, his Old Testament ancestors Adam and Eve are pictured most prominently in the foreground of the scene. In the wider scope of transgressing the frontier between the two Testaments, the *Transfiguration of Christ* is of central significance. Essentially, this miraculous event on Mount Tabor merges the two Covenants, because here the

⁴⁷ Girolami Cheney, "Giorgio Vasari's Oratory" 218, recently suggested an alternative interpretation: 'The three scenes from the New Testament by Vasari are tied to the theme of transformation from paganism to Christianity and from the human to the divine'.

⁴⁸ It has already been recognized that Vasari's *Conversion of Saul* echoes a tapestry cartoon of the same subject by Raphael; see Girolami Cheney, "Giorgio Vasari's Oratory" 218.

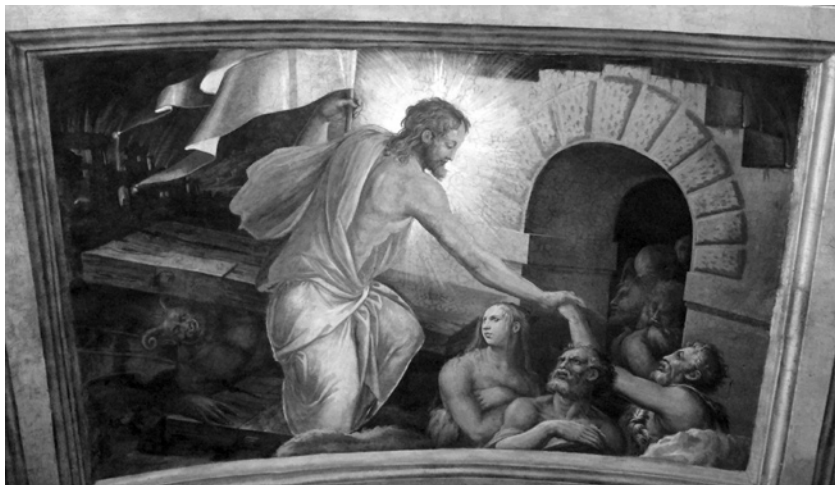


Fig. 14. Cristofano Gherardi (after Vasari), *Christ in Limbo* (1555). Fresco. Cortona, Oratory of the Compagnia del Buon Gesù, now part of the Museo diocesano.



Fig. 15. Cristofano Gherardi (after Vasari), *Conversion of Saul* (1555). Fresco. Cortona, Oratory of the Compagnia del Buon Gesù, now part of the Museo diocesano.



Fig. 16. Cristofano Gherardi (after Vasari), *Transfiguration of Christ* (1555). Fresco. Cortona, Oratory of the Compagnia del Buon Gesù, now part of the Museo diocesano.

Old Testament prophets Moses and Elijah testify the revelation of Christ's divine origin and glory.

By placing these scenes on the ceiling – the architectural element connecting the lower oratory with the upper church – Vasari aims to tie his cycle of twelve individual sacrifices to the single and unique sacrifice given to the twelve disciples by Christ himself: the *Communion of the Apostles* by Luca Signorelli. This concept of trans-spatial typology relies heavily on the wealth of meaning centered around the *Transfiguration of Christ*. Based on the various elements of the narrative, the event not only marked a pivotal moment with respect to the transgression between the Old and New Testaments, but also in terms of space. In Christian theology, for

instance, the setting on the mountain is presented as the point where human nature meets God: the meeting place for the temporal and the eternal, with Jesus himself as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth.⁴⁹

In terms of iconography, Vasari plays on the stupendous symbolic universality of the *Transfiguration* by placing the image in the dead center of a diverse field of images, interconnecting the decorations of two adjacent rooms. In fact, the image becomes a typological meta-image that provides the essential link to connect the twelve offerings in the lower oratory with the *Communion of the Apostles* in the upper church. Simultaneously, Vasari's employment of the *Transfiguration* reactivates the idea of artistic competition. Here again, he puts himself in a dynamic rivalry with one of his admired predecessors. This competition, however, cannot be characterized as a rivalry in a strong sense of its meaning. Quite to the contrary, it must be interpreted as an honorable opportunity to flaunt his own works side by side with those of his childhood hero. Certainly, Vasari felt strongly related to Luca Signorelli, as he owed his ability of drawing to the native Cortonese:

And since he lodged in the house of the Vasari, in which I then was, a little boy of eight years old, I remember that the good old man, who was most gracious and courteous, having heard from the master who was teaching me my first letters, that I gave my attention to nothing in lesson-time save to drawing figures, I remember, I say, that he turned to my father Antonio and said to him: 'Antonio, if you wish little Giorgio not to become backward, by all means let him learn to draw, for, even were he to devote himself to letters, design cannot be otherwise than helpful, honourable, and advantageous to him, as it is to every gentleman [...].'⁵⁰

Aside from the personal relationship, Vasari suggested that Signorelli's powerful inventions marked a crucial stage on the way to the final perfection of art (*ultima perfezzione dell'arte*).⁵¹ This can be largely attributed to

⁴⁹ Lee D., *Transfiguration* (London: 2004) 2.

⁵⁰ Quoted from the Life of Luca Signorelli (Vasari, *Lives* IV 75); 'E perché alloggiò in casa de' Vasari, dove io era piccolo fanciullo d'otto anni, mi ricorda che quel buon vecchio, il quale era tutto grazioso e pulito, avendo inteso dal maestro che m'insegnava le prime lettere che io non attendeva ad altro in iscuola che a far figure, mi ricorda, dico, che voltosi ad Antonio mio padre gli disse: "Antonio, poi che Giorgino non traligna, fa' ch'egli impari a disegnare in ogni modo, perché quando anco attendesse alle lettere, non gli può essere il disegno, sì come è a tutti i galantuomini, [...]"' (Vasari, *Vite* III 639).

⁵¹ See the Life of Luca Signorelli: 'Così col fine della Vita di costui, che fu nel 1521, porremo fine alla Seconda Parte di queste Vite, terminando in Luca come in quella persona che col fondamento del disegno e delli ignudi particolarmente, e con la grazia

his anatomically accurate figures and graceful compositions. Yet Raphael and Michelangelo finally achieved this perfection. They set the standard by which Vasari and his generation were judged. Therefore, it is fair to say that Vasari was not attempting to exceed his predecessors in terms of artistic quality. Quite to the contrary, he knew only too well that the pattern of progress was abandoned after Michelangelo gave his *ultimo iudicio* over the art of all times, by unveiling the *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel.⁵² Rather, Vasari tried to compete in terms of efficiency. This will receive further clarification, by considering a second case study.

*A Mixture of Old and New Testament:
Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini in the Cappella Paolina*

The Cappella Paolina, situated between the Sala Regia and the basilica of St. Peter, is among the main ceremonial rooms of the papal palace. Until the seventeenth century, the Paolina served as the conclave chapel. It was also used as the chapel of the Sacrament, where the consecrated Host was stored and displayed during the celebration of the Easter Sepulcher and the Forty Hours Devotion.⁵³ Most of the literature concerning the decoration of the Cappella Paolina has focused on Michelangelo's previously mentioned frescoes, which occupy the central portions of the lateral walls [Fig. 17].⁵⁴ Recently, Margaret Kuntz devoted a study exclusively to the iconography of the vault decoration, which was executed between 1580 and 1585 by Federico Zuccari [Fig. 18].⁵⁵ My focus, however, lies on an alternative decorative scheme for the vault and the narrow vertical fields flanking Michelangelo's last frescoes. This program was originally devised by Vincenzo Borghini and Vasari somewhere around early May 1573, but never came to execution. As it happens, Pope Gregory XIII

della invenzione e disposizione delle istorie, aperse alla maggior parte delli artefici la via all'ultima perfezzione dell'arte, alla quale poi poterono dar cima quelli che seguirono, de' quali noi ragioneremo per inanzi' (Vasari, *Vite* III 640).

⁵² Blum, "Zur Geschichtstheologie von Vasaris Vite" 273–277.

⁵³ On the liturgical function of the Cappella Paolina, see Kuntz M.A., "Designed for Ceremony. The Cappella Paolina at the Vatican Palace", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62 (2003) 228–255.

⁵⁴ See note 18. On the entire decoration of the chapel, see Baumgart F., *Die Fresken des Michelangelo, L. Sabbatini und F. Zuccari in der Cappella Paolina im Vatikan* (Rome: 1934).

⁵⁵ Kuntz M.A., "Federico Zuccari, Gregory XIII, and the Vault Frescoes of the Cappella Paolina", in Winner M. – Heikamp D. (eds.), *Der Maler Federico Zuccari. Ein römischer Virtuoso von europäischem Ruhm* (Munich: 1999) 221–229.



Fig. 17. View of the Cappella Paolina. Rome, Vatican Palace.

disapproved the scheme, probably because it included apocryphal scenes, thus going against the mandates of the Council of Trent.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the program is preserved in a detailed letter from the hand of Vincenzo Borghini addressed to Giorgio Vasari.⁵⁷ In analogy to previous collaborations, Borghini was responsible for providing the iconographic concept, while Vasari was in charge of the arrangement of decorative fields and figural compositions.⁵⁸ In this particular case, however, Vasari limited his involvement to the execution of a few preparatory drawings and designated Lorenzo Sabbatini to carry out the fresco work. Nevertheless, the

⁵⁶ See Baumgart, *Die Fresken des Michelangelo* 59–60.

⁵⁷ Don Vincenzo Borghini in Pian di Mugnone to Giorgio Vasari in Florence, 1573 (between 28 July and 10 August); for a full transcription of the letter, see Frey K., *Der literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris*, 2 vols. (Munich: 1923–1930) II 800–805.

⁵⁸ See Scorza R.A., “Vincenzo Borghini and Invenzione. The Florentine Apparato of 1565”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 44 (1981) 57–75; Vasari G., *Descrizione dell'apparato fatto nel Tempio di S. Giovanni di Fiorenza per lo battesimo della Signora prima figliuola dell'Illustrissimo, et Eccellentissimo S. Principe di Fiorenza, et Siena Don Francesco Medici, e della Serenissima Reina Giovanna d'Austria* (Florenz 1568), ed. C. Davis, URL: http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2008/425/pdf/Davis_Fontes6.pdf (online resource: 2008).



Fig. 18. Frederico Zuccari, *Ceiling Decoration of the Cappella Paolina* (1580–85). Rome, Vatican Palace.

letter provides profound insight into the typological thinking of Borghini and Vasari. It gives a sensitive account of the supreme and universal function of the *Transfiguration*, as in fact the subject was designated to stabilize the entire program like a keystone in the apex of the vault. Since we have examined Vasari's earlier usage of this particular motif, in the context of both typological programs and artistic competitions with his predecessors, the solution proposed by Borghini is hardly surprising. Of special significance, however, is that the Borghini letter sets forth a rational explanation of how the *Transfiguration* fits into the grand scheme of such a complex and heterogeneous iconography.

Borghini opens the letter with a summary of the ceremonial functions advised for the chapel and an inventory of its remnant decoration, dating

back to the times of Michelangelo.⁵⁹ Subsequently, he reflects on the need of developing any further decoration within the restraints of this general set-up. At this point, typology comes into play, as he envisioned a sophisticated iconography consisting of several Old and New Testament subjects and some apocryphal scenes too – all of it supposed to be tied together by the *Transfiguration*:

I had thought, [...] to propose a subject that would refer to the election of the Popes, with some actions of the two holy and princely apostles, jointly signifying [...] that the Holy Church had always been governed by the divine spirit, and not by human spirits and inventions, and that everything in the church follows the divine order, as first revealed to Moses in prefigurations of the New Law. [...] This *concetto* in mind, and regarding the sketch of the vault that you gave me, I envision in the middle of the ceiling a beautiful oval or square, or however it suits you. In this, I would place the story of the *Transfiguration of Our Lord*, in which the apostles come together with the lawgiver and another prophet of the Old Testament. This proves the conjunction of the two Laws and how the imperfection of the Old reached its perfection in the New and how it progressed towards fulfillment. [...] In the corners of the vault, [...] I would place, out of necessity, not a single square or tondo, but two ovals, squares, or oblong fields, [...] containing two stories: one towards the head of the dome, containing either scenes from the life of Moses or the life of Elijah; the other, situated immediately above the wall, showing a scene from the life of the corresponding Saint, who has his history painted on the adjacent wall [by Michelangelo].⁶⁰

⁵⁹ 'Nella Cappella Paolina, per la quale voi vorreste un'invenzione per la pittura che vi si hanno a fare, sono da considerare, secondo che voi mit dite, le infrascitte cose: Prima, che in essa si conserva perpetuamente il Ss. Sacramento; appresso, che vi creano i sommi Pontifici. E, quanto alla pittura, vi è da una parte la Conversione di S. Paolo, al quale, secondo che il nome suona, pare ch'ella sia dedicata; e perché i duoi gloriosi principi della Chiesa son sempre da lei accompagnati insieme, dall'altra parte è la Crocifissione di S. Pietro' (Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass* II 800).

⁶⁰ 'Io aveva pensato, [...] di pigliare un subietto che comprendesse la creazione de' Sommi Pontifici, con alcune azioni dei santissimi principi degli Apostoli, insieme mostrando che [...] sempre fu governata la Santa Chiesa per divino spirito, e non per invenzioni e trovati umani, e che tutto quello che nella chiesa e spiritualmente e corporalmente si esercita, è ordine divino, prima data con la sua bocca a Moisè per figura della nuova legge, [...]. Or, seguendo questo concetto e lo spartimento che avete designato di fare, veggio che nel mezzo del cielo viene un bello ovato o quadro, come a voi parrà. In questo io metterei la storia della Transfigurazione di nostro Signore, nella quale, e per mostrare questa congiunzione delle due leggi e come la imperfezione della vecchia s'aveva a far perfetta e conseguire il suo vero fine nella nuova, congiunse insieme gli Apostoli suoi con il Legislatore ed un profeta della legge vecchia, [...]. Negli angoli della volta, [...] par che di necessità vengano non un quadro o un tondo solo, ma due ovati, quadri o bislungi, [...] farei due istoriette, l'una, cioè quella verso la testa della cupola, che rispondesse alle cose di Moisè e d' Elia, e l' altra, che viene sopra la facciata, una del medesimo santo, che in quella facciata ha la sua istoria [...]' (Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass* II, 801).

The importance of the *Transfiguration* to the stability of the overall iconography is reinforced by the closing passage of this letter, where Borghini admits that the 'mixture of Old and New Testament subjects' might interfere with a stricter understanding of history painting – one that pays close attention to the unity of time and the unity of place.⁶¹ Interestingly, such premises had already been challenged by Raphael's *Transfiguration*, where 'two different biblical stories [the Transfiguration of Christ and the Healing of the Possessed Boy], set in different places, have been woven into a single, contrary-motion narrative'.⁶² Then again, in the perspective of Borghini's letter, the theme of 'Christ's Transfiguration' is understood as a vital asset for the cohesion of a complex iconography (for example, a typological program). On the other hand, it could easily be replaced if one decides to employ a more straightforward decorative scheme, consisting of episodes that are bound to a single narrative continuum.

This is not the place to explore the iconography of the projected decoration of the Cappella Paolina in every detail. Borghini proposed at least sixteen individual subjects of the Old and New Testament accompanied by several personifications of virtues. In opposition, only two drawings by Vasari, depicting scenes from the life of the apostles, are associated with the early stage of designing the program.⁶³ Vasari's surprising restraint during the process of developing and executing the decoration of this prestigious chapel indicates his progression towards a more established artist. Vasari's status in this particular course of events can be defined as a coordinator between the Holy See, the advisor Vincenzo Borghini and the artist Lorenzo Sabbatini. Since it had taken the solitary Michelangelo seven years to finish only the two central frescoes of the lateral walls, it was now up to Vasari to organize the quick processing and the artistic quality, thus the overall efficiency of the chapel's decoration.

Coda

Within the realm of biblical iconography, the supremacy of the Transfiguration is based on its multiple layers of meaning. First, the Transfiguration

⁶¹ 'E perchè I gusti sono diversi, quando non piacesse mescolare queste istorie del Nuovo con quelle del Testamento Vecchio, e nel mezzo non mettere la Transfigurazione, ma lo Spirito Santo o altra istoria, si portrebbono pigliare tutte da una parte dell' uno santo, e dall' alter dell' altro, [...]' (Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass* II 803).

⁶² Preimesberger, "Tragic Motifs" 6.

⁶³ Kuntz M.A., "Vincenzo Borghini and Giorgio Vasari. Two Drawings for the Cappella Paolina", in *The Burlington Magazine* 141 (1999) 592–597.

is the greatest miracle in the life of Christ. The event is prototypical for all other miracles through which Christ gave signs of his divine origin, just before His entry onto the way of suffering. Second, the pivotal location of the event on top of the mountain defines Christ as a bridge between the human and the divine, between heaven and earth. Finally, yet importantly, the Transfiguration is a theological focal point, in which two main protagonists of the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah, testify the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. This unique feature is strongly associated with classical typological thinking and singles out the event on Mount Tabor as the converging point of the two Testaments. In a more flexible understanding of the typological concept, the wealth of symbolic meaning distinguishes the Transfiguration as a truly universal motif that can be associated with a wide range of biblical subjects. As demonstrated by the survey of Vasari's adaptation of the subject, the Transfiguration had the exceptional capacity to interconnect loose ends of a given decoration and unify a heterogeneous iconography. Moreover, Vasari's understanding of the Transfiguration cannot be reduced to its typological flexibility. Yet one must consider that the Transfiguration received its definitive interpretation by the hand of Raphael and was henceforth regarded as a symbol of artistic competition. Both aspects, the typological and the competition, share the underlying theme of continuity – continuity in iconography and continuity in the history of art.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of Vasari, the generation of Raphael and Michelangelo had already accomplished the final perfection of art, making the competition utterly one-sided. Consequently, Vasari could have hardly entertained the thought to surpass his predecessor in terms of artistic quality. Because of the incongruity of the competition, Vasari needed to maintain the aesthetic standards he inherited and yet complement them with a more efficient means of artistic production. It needs to be considered, however, that 'efficiency' is not exactly a contemporary notion, at least not in the art theory of the Italian Renaissance, although one finds the crucial constituents of 'efficiency' intrinsic to the conception of the Florentine Academy of the Arts of Drawing. The institution was founded in 1562 with the strong support of Giorgio Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini. As Marco Ruffini summarized, the academy was conceived with the intention of radically reorganizing artistic production.⁶⁴ Its founders

⁶⁴ Ruffini M., *Art without an Author: Vasari's Lives and Michelangelo's Death* (New York: 2011) 2.

aimed at making art teachable: the academy was intended to centralize and standardize the production of art. Catalyst for this purpose was the death of Michelangelo in February 1564. This incident 'inaugurated a symbolic shift from an era characterized by the outstanding achievements of singular artists, [...] to an institutional course embodied by the academy'.⁶⁵ Following the death of the divine artist, Vasari and Borghini employed the members of the academy to organize a spectacular funeral in Florence. Ruffini interpreted Michelangelo's funeral convincingly as a representation of the symbolic relationship Vasari established between the figure of the artist and his vision of the present state and the future of art.⁶⁶ The entire project of the Florentine funeral was the result of five months of planning. The spectacular allegorical program, now lost, was followed by a publication containing a detailed description of the event and its decoration by Jacopo Giunti – the text was later also included in Vasari's *Vite* as the closing chapter of Michelangelo's biography. Vasari's leadership in the organization of this funeral has long been acknowledged. However, what really stands out in the detailed description of the funeral's preparation is the emphasis the author puts on the involvement of the whole body of the academy. This was necessary because the extensive sculptural and pictorial decoration needed to be produced with the outmost 'efficiency':

And owing to the zeal that springs partly from a certain worthy rivalry (*virtuosa concorrentia*), partly from the wish to give general satisfaction [...] one saw within a few brief days the most beautiful paintings and sculptures grow under their hands with blithe and vigorous swiftness and excellence.⁶⁷

In this instance, we are presented once again with the duality of generation and competition. The quotation refers somewhat to a theoretical notion of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72), who established the category of *quickness-with-diligence*,⁶⁸ but widens it significantly in regards to the corporative efficiency of the academy, accomplished by means of serial production and the division of labor among the younger generation, all of it boosted by a worthy – that is, a positive and productive – kind of rivalry.

⁶⁵ Ruffini, *Art without an Author* 2.

⁶⁶ On the funeral of Michelangelo, see Ruffini, *Art without an Author* 11–38.

⁶⁷ Wittkower R. – Wittkower M. (eds.), *The Divine Michelangelo: The Florentine Academy's Homage on his Death in 1564. A Facsimile Edition of Esequie del Divino Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florence 1564* (London: 1964) 57–58.

⁶⁸ For the notion 'diligenza congiunta con prestezza', see Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: 1985) 123.

This leads back to the Transfiguration. Vasari's ongoing invocation of the subject is bound to its rich theological and art historical subtext. Vasari, emphatically, interpreted the *Transfiguration* as a link between past and present: as a symbolic continuance of the individual achievements of High-Renaissance artists in the light of the conventional and collective values of his own generation.

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RUBENS'S *CHRIST TRIUMPHANT OVER SIN AND DEATH*:
UNVEILING THE GLORY OF GOD

Barbara Haeger

Rubens's *Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death* in the Columbus Museum of Art [Fig. 1], executed with the assistance of his studio ca. 1616–20, is one of a number of the artist's depictions of the theme, many of which most likely functioned as epitaphs.¹ While clearly related to the other versions, most particularly the epitaph of Jerome Cock in the Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna [Fig. 2], the Columbus painting is unique.² Like the others, it vividly conveys Christ's victory over sin and death by which believers are redeemed, a victory that in Post-Tridentine Antwerp simultaneously evoked the Church's victory over heresy.³ Moreover, it too combines the theme of Christ's resurrection with the image of his victory over his enemies.⁴ However, the pictorial structure of the Columbus painting is radically different from all other depictions of the subject, including Rubens's own. It is devised to stage an encounter, to make the viewer acutely aware

¹ David Freedberg most convincingly dates the Columbus picture ca. 1616–1620 and argues that Rubens's representations of the subject most likely were commissioned as epitaphs; Freedberg D., *The Life of Christ after the Passion*, Corpus Rubenianum 7 (London: 1984) 59–61, 64; Freedberg D., "Rubens as a Painter of Epitaphs", *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis* 24 (1976–78) 63–66. On Rubens's epitaphs, see also the seminal work of Eisler C., "Rubens' Uses of the Northern Past: the *Michiels Triptych* and Its Sources", *Brussels Bulletin Musées royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique* 16 (1967) 43–78.

² The Liechtenstein painting is presumed to be from the tomb of Jerome Cock and dated 1615–1622 in Kräftner J. (ed.), *Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna: The Collections* (Munich: 2004) 316–317. The connection between the Liechtenstein painting (formerly in the collection of Dr. J. Declercq, Antwerp), first made by Julius S. Held, is discussed at length by Freedberg, who documents the picture's longstanding lamentable condition. Held J., "A Protestant Source for a Rubens Subject", in Lowenthal A. – Rosand D. – Walsh J. (eds.), *Rubens and His Circle* (Princeton: 1982) 140–141; Freedberg, *Life of Christ after the Passion* 64–68.

³ Wuyts L., "Het St-Jorisretabel van de Oude Voetboog door Maarten de Vos: Een ikonologisch onderzoek", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1971) 107–136; Woollett, A., *The Altarpiece in Antwerp 1554–1615: Painting and the Militia Guilds* (Ph.D. New York, Columbia University: 2004) 123–136; Freedberg D., *Iconoclasm and Painting in the Revolt in the Netherlands 1566–1609* (New York: 1988) 207–208.

⁴ Here a balance is achieved between *historia* and *imago*. As noted by Freedberg, of all Rubens's representations the Columbus picture most completely combines the ideas of resurrection and victory over Sin and Death; *The Life of Christ after the Passion* 63–64.



Fig. 1. [COL. PL. 22] Peter Paul Rubens and Studio, "Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death", (ca. 1615–1620). Oil on canvas, 212.73 × 170.82 cm. Columbus, Ohio, Columbus Museum of Art. Image © Columbus Museum of Art. (Derby Fund, 1964.010).



Fig. 2. Peter Paul Rubens, "Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death", (before 1620). Oil on panel, 182.1 × 231.9 cm. Vienna, Liechtenstein Museum. Image © Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections Vaduz-Vienna (Inv.-Nr GE270).

of beholding Christ, 'the image of the invisible God',⁵ who is being simultaneously transformed and revealed to her from a place that lies beyond the threshold of the painting. The repoussoir in the left foreground clearly situates the viewer in a space both close to and yet at some distance from Christ who fixes her with his compelling gaze. This threshold, which is crossed by the exchange of gazes that unites the viewer to Christ even as it creates a sense of the distance that lies between them, structures the beholder's experience of the painting in a way that addresses its function as an epitaph. Moreover, by simultaneously establishing a boundary and envisioning the crossing of it, the painting prompts the viewer to engage in a process of exegesis as one binary opens into another – here and there, temporal and eternal, mortal and immortal, human and divine, terrestrial and celestial, visible and invisible – a process that, I hope to demonstrate,

⁵ *Colossians* 1:15.

leads not only to the discovery of doctrinal truth and divine mystery but also to self-reform.

The Subject

Rubens's depictions of Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death reveal a debt to Counter-Reformation paintings and prints produced in Antwerp in the last decades of the sixteenth century, and, like them, appear to respond to a Protestant invention.⁶ The theme of the resurrected Christ as victor has its origins in numerous scriptural passages.⁷ However, it only became a popular subject during the Reformation when Lucas Cranach the Elder and others gave visual expression to Luther's assertion that it was through his resurrection that Christ had triumphed over Sin and Death.⁸ As Julius Held notes, it was Luther who 'spoke of the "passage of Christ" (including his descent into limbo) by virtue of which he slew Sin, Death, and the Devil' and Lucas Cranach the Elder whose representations first gave this description an explicitly sectarian visual interpretation. In numerous works he shows that Christ had actively secured man's salvation through his sacrifice on the cross and subsequent resurrection, whereby he defeated Sin, Death, and the Devil – visible either beneath Christ's feet or being trampled by the Lamb of God.⁹ It is, however, the image of the triumphant Christ seated on the sarcophagus, holding the banner of victory, and employing his enemies as a footstool included in one of these works, the 1530 woodcut, *Allegory of Law and Grace* [Fig. 3], that appears to be the basis for the evolution of this articulation of the theme in Antwerp, as Held suggests.¹⁰

An anonymous Antwerp painting of ca. 1540 (whereabouts unknown, formerly in the collection of Georges Hulin de Loo in Ghent), which repeats the general formula with modifications, is the model for a later painting

⁶ I have intentionally chosen the designation 'Counter-Reformation' because I believe it applies to the situation in Antwerp.

⁷ The following passages are cited by Freedberg and Held: *Psalms* 91:13, *Psalms* 90:1, 1 *Corinthians* 15:24–26 and 54–56, *Hosea* 13:14, 2 *Timothy* 1:10, *Revelations* 1:18. Freedberg, *The Life of Christ after the Passion* 59; Held, "A Protestant Source" 146, n. 18.

⁸ On the theme see Freedberg, *The Life of Christ after the Passion* 59–60; Schrade H., *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst, I, Die Auferstehung Christi* (Berlin: 1932) 296–304; Schiller G., *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst* 3 (Kassel: 1971) 32–33.

⁹ Held, "A Protestant Source" 141.

¹⁰ *Ibidem* 141–143.



Fig. 3. Lucas Cranach the Elder (Workshop of), "Allegory of the Law and the Gospel", (ca. 1528–1532). Woodcut, 233 × 324 mm. Image © The British Museum.

attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder (Bruges, Saint John's Hospital [Fig. 4]).¹¹ These works, while depicting the seated resurrected Christ with his enemies underfoot, now include the orb of the world among the latter and substitute the cross of Christ's sacrifice for the banner of victory, thereby indicating that through his death and resurrection Christ has secured man's salvation.¹² The pictures appear as an intermediate

¹¹ The anonymous work is discussed, dated, and reproduced in Held, "A Protestant Source" 141–146, fig. XII, 7. The Bruges painting is attributed to Gheeraerts the Elder by numerous scholars but is dated no more precisely than the second half of the sixteenth century. Tahon E., "Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder" in Martens M.P.M. et al., *Bruges and the Renaissance: Memling to Pourbus* (Paris – Bruges: 1998) 231–233; Faggini G.T., "Due dipinti di Marcus Gheeraerts il Vecchio", in *Album Amicorum J. G. van Gelder* (The Hague: 1973) 117.

¹² Another version in the Academia appears to be based on Gheeraerts's work; Held, "A Protestant Source" 147, n. 27. That the orb signifies the world and its vanities, linking it to Death and Sin, seems evident from its placement. It plays a similar role in Maarten de Vos's 1590 triptych for the Oude Voetboog; see, Wuyts, "Het St.-Jorisretabel" 114.



Fig. 4. Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, "Christ as Salvator Mundi", (second half of the 16th century). Oil on panel, 108 × 74.5 cm. Bruges, Memlingmuseum. Oude Apotheek. Sint – Janshospitaal. Image © IRPA-KIK, Brussels.

stage in the evolution of the theme from Lutheran invention to Catholic transformation. Removed from the allegorical framework, the scene has become an independent subject, one which, deprived of the supportive context of related scenes and figures and occasionally accompanying texts, must employ inscriptions to make explicit that works are not required because Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for mankind's redemption. Both pictures include a paper bearing the word 'PECCATU[M]' nailed to the cross that Christ supports with one hand along with related inscriptions derived from *Colossians* 2:12–17. A paraphrase of the latter adorns an ornate plaque toward which Christ gestures in the work formerly in Hulin de Loo's collection. In legal phraseology the plaque states that having forgiven the trespasses of those dead in sin and uncircumcised in the flesh and having nailed the debenture to the cross, Christ blotted out the written bond against us.¹³ The inscription in Gheeraert's painting, carved into the block of stone next to Christ's seat, is more succinct. It is basically a transcription of *Colossians* 2:14: 'Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross'.¹⁴ The paintings are connected with Calvinist elements in Antwerp by Held, who notes that it was Calvin who focused on this biblical passage in his attacks on the rituals of the Roman Church under the guise of condemning Jewish ceremonial law.¹⁵ Gheeraerts's active role in the Calvinist community and council in Bruges before he was forced to flee in 1568 provides contextual support for Held's conclusions.¹⁶

The Columbus painting is surely a response to these images and their arguments.¹⁷ Its transformation of the withdrawn sacrificial victim into an heroic figure whose triumph is actively asserted and whose glorious body is unveiled and made present to the viewer can be understood both

¹³ Both inscriptions are derived from *Colossians* 2:11–15; Held, "A Protestant Source" 142.

¹⁴ My thanks to Christopher Brown of the Classics Department at Ohio State University for translating the Latin text.

¹⁵ Held, "A Protestant Source" 142. Although Held cites only *Colossians* 2:14, he paraphrases verses 11–17 in discussing Calvin's interpretation, which he connects with the painting.

¹⁶ Tahon, "Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder" 231.

¹⁷ Oddly enough, Gheeraerts's painting has been attributed to Rubens, an attribution that I cannot accept and that has found no support in the literature; Leiss R., *Die Kunst des Rubens* (Braunschweig: 1977) 67–72.

as an argument for the justification of images¹⁸ and as an assertion of the Real Presence in the Eucharist, as I shall demonstrate below. Here I wish to note only that Rubens substitutes an altar-like block for the sarcophagus and employs angels to prompt the viewer to make the connection with the Sacrament, enrich her experience, and demand her participation. The picture presents an act of revelation, and the angels can be understood as performing their liturgical role as witnesses to divine presence as described by the Jesuit Johannes David in one of his texts explaining all aspects of Church ceremonies and the significance of liturgical furnishings printed in Antwerp in 1622. According to David, who explains the relationship between Christ's victory and resurrection and the Eucharist, there are curtains on the altar because the altar is like the throne of God and the curtains are like the clouds that are opened when the holy body is consecrated and comes out of the heavens and is revealed to the people. And he explains that angels are portrayed on pillars by the altar to show that they are present during the sacrifice of the Mass to honor the savior.¹⁹ Surely, the beholder contemplating Rubens's picture in a Catholic church would have perceived its connection with the Sacrament of the Altar, the Eucharist,²⁰ which makes more immediate the promise of everlasting life inherent in Christ's victory and resurrection.²¹ Particularly important in this context is a feature of Rubens's picture, which adds another dimension to the believer's experience. Christ looks directly at the beholder; he is not only present in a way that defends doctrine and the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist but that commands the viewer and demands his participation, *as grace demands the participation of will and its manifestation in works*. I shall explore these claims below, after

¹⁸ Here it should simply be noted that the basis for the argument develops out of the painting's emphasis on the dual nature of Christ, which, like the image, unites material and immaterial, and its evocation of *Colossians* 1:14–15, in which it is stated that we are redeemed by Christ 'who is the image of the invisible God'. For Rubens's related but more explicit argument for the justification of images, see: Haeger B., "Rubens's *Rockox Triptych*: Sight, Meditation, and the Justification of Images", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 55 (2004) 133–135.

¹⁹ David Johannes, *Den Cruythof der kerckelicker traditien ende cerimonien* (Antwerp, Jan Cnobbaert: 1622) 102 and *Den Bloem-hof der kerckelicker cerimonien* (Antwerp, Jan Cnobbaert: 1622) 29.

²⁰ On the centrality of the doctrine of the Real Presence and the Sacrifice of the Mass to Catholic identity as asserted in Antwerp at this time and on Rubens's treatment of the subject, see Lawrence C., "Before the *Raising of the Cross*: The Origins of Rubens's Earliest Antwerp Altarpieces", *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999): 265–96.

²¹ 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day' (*John* 6:55).

considering several earlier paintings and prints that employed the subject as a vehicle for Catholic beliefs. These works anticipate the Columbus and Vienna pictures in their emphatically triumphal character. This character is particularly evident in the triptych Maarten de Vos painted in 1590 for the altar of the Oude Voetboog in the Antwerp Cathedral, a work that Rubens certainly knew, as the altarpiece was installed in a new, highly visible transept chapel in the cathedral. Here the victorious Christ appears as the centerpiece [Fig. 5] of the triptych that celebrates Antwerp's return to the Catholic fold in 1585 and the triumph of the true faith over heresy.²²

In the central panel, the resurrected Christ, holding the banner of victory and with his red mantle swirling about him, appears as a commanding figure. With Sin and Death underfoot, he receives the homage of attending figures, while angels prepare to crown him with wreaths of victory. Intervening between the viewer and Christ are saints Peter and Paul who are included for several reasons. They represent the Roman Church, and they were among the first to articulate the doctrine of salvation.²³ This is evinced in the texts they display, which are derived from *Acts* 2:17–24 and *Romans* 6:8–14, both of which attest to Christ's resurrection to which the reader's salvation is linked. The text from *Acts* speaks of the miracles and wonders that God did through Christ, whom he raised up from hell and who saves all who call on his name. That from *Romans* emphasizes the believers' identification with Christ, as is asserted in the first verse: 'Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ'.²⁴ While the text proceeds to celebrate Christ's victory over death, whereby humanity is freed from the Law and placed under the dominion of Grace, it also admonishes believers not to submit to the lusts of the flesh and in verse 13 urges readers to: 'present yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice unto God'.²⁵ Both texts, Wuyts asserts, remind the viewer that

²² Wuyts L., "Het St.-Jorisretabel" 124–130; Woollett, A., *The Altarpiece in Antwerp 1554–1615: Painting and the Militia Guilds* (Ph.D. New York, Columbia University: 2004): 118–133.

²³ Moreover, they serve to glorify Christ's victory; Zweite A., *Marten de Vos als Maler: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Antwerpener Malerei in der zweite Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: 1980) 203–204. Wuyts, "Het St.-Jorisretabel" 114–116.

²⁴ *Romans* 6:8.

²⁵ *Romans* 6:8–14: 'Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ: 9. Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. 10. For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God: 11. So do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12. Let no sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof. 13. Neither yield ye your members as



Fig. 5. Maarten de Vos, "Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death", center panel of the Triptych for the Oude Voetboog painted for the cathedral of Antwerp (1590). Oil on panel, 347 × 280 cm. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen. Image © IRPA-KIK, Brussels.

with the promise of salvation comes the obligation to reform; one who is baptized is freed from the Law and hence transformed.²⁶

The conspicuously displayed texts in de Vos's altarpiece, like the figure of Christ in Rubens's Vienna and Columbus paintings, directly address the viewer. These texts may well have played a role in inspiring the Columbus picture's unique treatment of the theme.²⁷ Like the texts, Christ is presented to the beholder whom he addresses and whom, I shall argue, he prompts to reform and conform to his perfected image. Rubens also adopted the heroic character and celebratory motifs – the wreaths, palm branches, and adoring angels – employed by de Vos. However, the relationship between his portrayal of the victorious Christ and the beholder is radically different from that of de Vos. In the latter, the Prince Apostles intervene between the viewer and the triumphant Christ as they display the texts that admonish the viewer in addition to bearing witness to his victory over Sin, Death, the Devil and the vanities of the world.²⁸ Thus they perform the mediating role of the Church in providing access to the redeeming benefits of Christ's sacrifice and victory, making it clear that one can enter heaven only through the Church.²⁹ The painting reflects a

instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice unto God. 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace'.

²⁶ Wuyts, "St.-Jorisretabel" 114–116. Presumably connecting the reference to Christ's name to baptism and the reader's identification with Christ expressed in the text from Romans, Wuyts emphasizes the connection of the biblical passages to the Catholic doctrine of salvation, which he explains as indicating that those who are baptized undergo a transformation that requires that they shall henceforth strive to lead a life of righteousness. He states that that with his resurrection Christ brings proof that the heavens are opened and that he really is the Lord who sits on the right hand of God and who gives forgiveness of sin through baptism in his name. In baptism the old man is crucified with Jesus in order to die to sin and be reborn, to rise up to a new life in the grace of the Lord. Moreover, he argues that the text from Romans that is displayed should be read in conjunction with the two verses that precede it in the Bible, *Romans* 6:5–6: 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer'. The language of these two verses is closely related to that of 1 *Corinthians* 15, a seminal text on the doctrine of the resurrection and one essential to Rubens's conception of the Columbus picture.

²⁷ The language of *Romans* 6:5–6 cited in note 26 is of particular interest in this context in that it evokes a reflexive relationship between the viewer/reader and Christ.

²⁸ According to Wuyts, the dragon symbolizes sin and the skull death, while the orb, which Gheeraerts depicted along with the skull and serpent under Christ's feet, signifies the world because his kingdom is not of this world and the true Christian turns from the vanity of the world; "St.-Jorisretabel" 114.

²⁹ That one can enter heaven only through the Church is a commonplace of Catholic doctrine reiterated in text and image in Counter-Reformation Antwerp. See, for example,

Jesuit emphasis on the mediating role not only of Christ but of institutions and images as well, which is hardly surprising given the key role played by the Jesuits and Franciscus Costerus, in particular, in shaping Antwerp's Catholic identity after 1585.³⁰ The picture effectively presents what Hugo Rahner, in his explanation of Ignatian theology, calls the 'cosmos of the middle', where above and below are bound up in the mediating activity of the one mediator – the Word made flesh.³¹ Rahner writes:

Between the 'above' of immediate consolation and the 'below' of the world crying out for redemption there stands the 'middle': the Church and, in the Church, the Mediator. The wall between 'above' and 'below' has been broken down, in Christ two things have been made one (Eph. 2:14).³²

Here it is worth noting that *Ephesians* 2:14–15 states:

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmities in his flesh: Making void the law of commandments contained in decrees; that he might make the two in himself into one new man, making peace.

In his commentary on the New Testament first printed in Antwerp in 1594, Franciscus Costerus explains this chapter as showing that Christ shall make peace between Jews and Gentiles and between man and God. Christ is a new man who unites both in his body and who reconciles all with God the Father by killing sin, which made the enmity, through his body that tasted death. It is through Christ who opens the way, he continues, that we have access to God, but also through the Holy Spirit, which

David, *Den Bloem-hof* 70 and Costerus Franciscus, *Het Nieu Testament onses Heeren Jesu Christi met korte uytlegginge door Franciscum Costerum* (Antwerp, Joachim Troгнаesius: 1594) 47. Rubens's designs for both the choir screen of Saint Michael's Abbey and the façade of the Jesuit Church are equally explicit, and in both Saints Peter and Paul frame the representation of the entrance to the Heavenly Jerusalem. See Haeger B., "The Façade of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp: Representing the Church Militant and Triumphant", in Lombaerde P. (ed.) *Innovation and Experience in Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, Architectura Moderna 6 (Turnhout: 2008) 97–124; idem, "The Choir Screen at St. Michael's Abbey in Antwerp: Gateway to the Heavenly Jerusalem", in Stighelen K. van der (ed.), *Munuscula Amicorum: Contributions on Rubens and His Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe* (Turnhout: 2006) 527–548. Armin Zweite notes that the construction indicates that Christ is glorified in the Church; *Marten de Vos als Maler* 203–204.

³⁰ Haeger, "The Façade of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp" 123.

³¹ Rahner H., *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans. M. Barry (New York: 1968) 11–12.

³² Rahner, *Ignatius* 10.

makes us children of God and gives the freedom to go to God, as well as through the Church, in which we enter into the family of Christ.³³

Christ as Mediator: The Glorious Body of the Resurrected Christ

The mediating role of the Church, effectively articulated in Costerus's commentary and evident in De Vos's triptych for the Oude Voetboog, is an explicitly Catholic construction and one that stands in contrast to Marcus Gheeraerts's painting [fig. 4], in which Christ alone mediates between the viewer and heaven. Although the inscribed texts and composition of the painting make clear that Christ, by paying all debts and conquering Sin and Death, has removed these obstacles to salvation, the viewer is prompted to contemplate Christ's sacrifice in a work that is more redolent of sorrow and sacrifice than triumph. Gheeraerts's Christ is self-effacing, deflecting attention from himself, as he turns inward, bows his head, casts down his eyes, and raises his right arm toward heaven. He appears more an instrument than an actor even though he places his foot on the skull and serpent. Consequently, the emphasis of the work is on the cost of sin, on the burden of debt that Christ assumed on the cross, which is underscored by the verse inscribed on the block, *Colossians* 2:14. The tenor of Gheeraert's painting thus corresponds with one of the verses preceding this text, which states that one is buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him 'by the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him up from the dead'.³⁴ Christ's confident display of his victory over his enemies described in the succeeding verse is not portrayed. The latter, however, attracted the attention of Franciscus Costerus in his commentary on *Colossians* 2:12–15.³⁵ Not surprisingly, Costerus's interpretation is as different from Calvin's as de Vos's triumphant Christ is from Gheeraerts's introverted figure.³⁶ Costerus, noting that the Savior defeated the devil and

³³ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 657–658.

³⁴ *Colossians* 2:12.

³⁵ *Colossians* 2:12–15: 'Buried with him in baptism, in whom also you are risen again by the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him up from the dead. 13. And you, when you were dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh; he hath quickened together with him, forgiving you all offences: 14. Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross: 15. And despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open shew, triumphing over them in himself'.

³⁶ Commenting on this text, Costerus explicitly states that Christ paid the debts for all sins but one must be confirmed in faith and the sacraments to benefit; Costerus

liberated his captives, writes that he bound his enemy and displayed him to all the angels and the deceased, an action he likens to that of princes in the past who put their bound enemies on display. In addition, Costerus compares the resurrected Christ's radiant new body to the soul of one who has been baptized and washed clean of sin: 'baptism shall purify our soul and make it bright like Christ's body is bright in his resurrection'.³⁷ He continues to explain that we come to baptism full of sin and emerge from it with a bright, shining soul. Faith makes us righteous, but, lest we misunderstand, he adds that it is not just faith but the works of faith that are required.³⁸ Costerus also describes baptism as spiritual circumcision, as a cutting off of the old man, a removal of all the sin found in man.³⁹

I have dwelt on Costerus's commentary because it addresses the believer's kinship with Christ along with key features that figure prominently in Rubens's Columbus painting [fig. 1] and in Jan Sadeler's 1580 engraving after Maarten de Vos [fig. 7].⁴⁰ Chief among these features is Christ's glorious body, which Costerus discusses in relation to the reader's baptism, faith, and resurrection, noting that the latter's soul cleansed by baptism, like the body of the resurrected Christ, is radiant. Moreover, his references to the cutting off of the old man and to being buried with Christ and raised up with him evoke 1 *Corinthians* 15, the seminal text, cited on Sadeler's engraving, that addresses these same issues in the context of explaining the mystery of the Resurrection.⁴¹ Finally, Costerus's commentary, specifically his description of the resurrected Christ and his display of his defeated enemies, corresponds closely to Hieronymus Wierix's representation of 'The Glorious Resurrection of Christ' [Fig. 6] in the authoritative and hugely influential Jesuit publication on the gospels, Jerome Nadal's *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels* (chapter 108,

Franciscus, *Het Nieu Testament onses Heeren Jesu Christi met korte uytlegginge door Franciscum Costerum* (Antwerp, Joachim Troгнаesius: 1614) 695.

³⁷ 'Dat het Doopsel onse siele van sonden suyvert/ende klaer maeckt/ghelijk Christi lichaem in sijne verijzenisse klaer is:...' Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1614) 695.

³⁸ Ibidem 694–696. Costerus's commentary indicates that faith manifests itself in works and the sacraments are necessary for salvation, and he rejects the claims of those that Christ's sacrifice, his payment of our debt, is sufficient. In other words, he directly attacks Calvin's interpretation, cited in conjunction with Gheeraerts's painting above.

³⁹ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testatment* (1614) 694–695.

⁴⁰ Held notes that Sadeler's engraving after de Vos, a Catholic transformation of the Protestant theme, constitutes the earliest prototype for Rubens's conceptions of the theme; "A Protestant Source" 143.

⁴¹ On the centrality of 1 *Corinthians* 15 to Rubens's representation of the resurrected Christ and his conception of another epitaph, see: Haeger, "Rubens's *Rockox Triptych*" 129–130.



Fig. 6. Hieronymus Wierix, engraved illustration in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (Antwerp, Martin Nutius: 1595) chapter 108, *imago* 134.

imago 134).⁴² Here the radiant, resurrected Christ enveloped in clouds of angels hovers above the captive figures of Death and the Devil, making clear that through his resurrection they are defeated. In his annotations accompanying the image, Nadal explains that Christ's soul has returned to his body, a body that is no longer vulnerable but incorruptible and immortal.⁴³ This new union is created as his soul's beatitudinal glory pours over his body, which now radiates surpassing beauty as an aura of transcendent glory envelops him.⁴⁴ According to Nadal, Christ proclaims: "I live to eternity! I have conquered the World, I have trampled upon the Devil, I have killed Death."⁴⁵ As Walter Melion notes, Christ's resurrection is not described in the Bible; rather it is attested to at second hand, by the radiant angels and by the relics of the veil and shroud that are left behind.⁴⁶ Thus, the image is unique among those accompanying the Passion narrative in Nadal's text, and, Melion argues, it has a distinctive status. As a substitution for a sacred text it 'demonstrates that certain key mysteries of faith are best known by means of pictorial images that complement rather than merely illustrate Scripture'.⁴⁷ In the chapters on 'The Glorious Resurrection of Christ' and the 'Sacred Day of Pentacost', Nadal demonstrates that Christ and the Holy Spirit appeal to humanity's sense of sight to bear witness and comprehend these mysteries. 'Through vision and the other exterior senses', Melion explains,

we are led to a fuller interior sense of the mystery of our salvation, now fully realized by a conjunction of Jesus's soul and glorified body, that guarantees the resurrection of the dead and promises eternal life.⁴⁸

Like Nadal, Rubens [Fig. 1] and de Vos [Fig. 5] mobilize the viewer's sense of sight in order to lead the beholder to an understanding of the mystery of salvation. In their paintings they employ rhetorical gestures to make the viewer self-consciously aware of the act of beholding the radiant body of the resurrected Christ and prompt him to perceive his own salvation

⁴² Nadal J., *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels, Volume 3: The Resurrection Narratives*, trans. F. Homan (Philadelphia: 2005) 35. Nadal's text was printed twice in Antwerp in 1595 and again in 1607.

⁴³ Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations* 3, 38.

⁴⁴ Ibidem 37–38.

⁴⁵ Ibidem 38.

⁴⁶ Melion W.S., "Mortis illius imagines ut vitae: The Image of the Glorified Christ in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationis et Meditationis in Evangelia*", in Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations* 3, 7.

⁴⁷ Melion, "Mortis illius imagines ut vitae" 7.

⁴⁸ Ibidem 3.

in Christ's victory. While the Prince Apostles perform this role in de Vos's triptych, Rubens shows an angel unveiling and making present the resurrected Christ. In place of the text that prompts the viewer to identify with Christ (*Romans* 6:8), Rubens stages an encounter in which the beholder is transfixed by Christ's riveting gaze and thereby experiences a connection. Rubens's painting thus creates a vivid and immediate impact, but it is also constructed to engage the viewer in prolonged contemplation and visual exegesis, a pictorial strategy that may well have been prompted by Sadeler's engraving after de Vos [Fig. 7], a work with which it has much in common.

De Vos's treatment of the theme engraved by Jan Sadeler I, like Marcus Gheeraerts's painting [Fig. 4], is dominated by the resurrected Christ, who, holding the cross and resting his foot on the skull and serpent while seated on the sarcophagus, is placed in the foreground in close proximity to the viewer. However, in place of the self-effacing figure who directs the viewer's attention to God in the heavens, de Vos portrays an imperial one enthroned on the sarcophagus, who receives the homage of the beholder. Enveloped in voluminous robes and holding the orb, indicative of his universal dominion,⁴⁹ he raises his right in a commanding manner and makes the gesture of blessing toward the viewer. The most striking feature of the image of the savior, however, is not his imperial mien but his glorified body. An intense apollonian halo of light encircles his head, and a heavenly glory of radiant clouds and angels appears to open up from his figure, giving access to the infinite expanse of heaven and revealing the life-giving properties of his flesh.⁵⁰ While Gheeraerts's Christ is

⁴⁹ The orb as an attribute of the ruler is conventional. However, de Vos's articulation differs from traditional orbs held by Christian rulers, orbs topped by the cross to indicate the Christian realm. De Vos's Christ holds a transparent sphere, which encompasses stars, sun, and earth, indicating universal dominion and emblematically underscoring the union of the terrestrial and celestial and Christ's dual nature. I have been led to pay close attention to this orb and hence to this perception by the work of Ivana Rosenblatt, who is exploring similar features in other works by de Vos in her dissertation: "Envisioning the Threshold: Pictorial Disjunction in Maarten de Vos". Held states simply that the orb signifies Christ's divine rule; "A Protestant Source" 143.

⁵⁰ The kinship with Costerus's commentary on *Ephesians* 2:14, in which it is stated that Christ has broken down the wall of partition and made both one, is evident. As cited above, Costerus writes that Christ is a new man who reconciles all with God the Father by killing sin *through his body* (italics mine) that tasted death. We have access to God, he writes, through Christ and the Holy Spirit who gives us the freedom to go to God *opening the way* (italics mine) earned through Christ ('de vrijheyt om tot Godt te gaen/openende ons den wegh tot hem door Christi verdienste'); Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 657–658.



Fig 7. Jan Sadeler I after Maarten de Vos, "Christ Triumphant", (1580). Engraving, 205 × 165 mm. London, The British Museum. Image © The British Museum.

shown leading the viewer from the terrestrial to the celestial, de Vos's savior unites the two realms.

De Vos underscores Christ's dual nature by situating his image within the narrative of his Passion. Christ is represented not in a generic landscape but in a specific time and place. Flanking his body, distant views of Jerusalem and Golgotha are visible through the openings in the cave where his sepulcher is situated. The setting reminds that Christ had

a mortal body, which he sacrificed on the cross for the redemption of humanity, while his radiant image reveals the new union by which his body is made glorious, immortal, and incorruptible. This juxtaposition of *historia* and *imago*, of Christ's Passion and his triumph, triggers further binary associations – terrestrial and celestial, temporal and eternal, mortal and immortal, human and divine – prompting the viewer to engage in an exegesis of the image and to discover the timeless truth that lies beyond the surface of history, the mystery of the Incarnation in which all contradictions are resolved.⁵¹

Clearly, de Vos's Christ, portrayed as the majestic and victorious source of salvation, appears as the mediator described in *Ephesians*, who, vanquishing enmity, breaks down the partition and in whom two things are made one.⁵² That he is the new man who reconciles God and man and unites both in his body is conveyed by text as well as image. Inscribed below are the words: 'in Christo omnes vivificabuntur. I Cor 15'. The complete verse states: 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive'.⁵³ Like *Colossians* 2:12–17,⁵⁴ *Acts* 2:17–24, and *Romans* 6:8–14 – portions of which were inscribed on previous depictions of the theme discussed above – 1 *Corinthians* 15 contains passages that describe Christ's princely triumph over his enemies and his victory through which the power of the law is made void and the believer is saved.⁵⁵ However, it

⁵¹ Discussing the way the surface, the story of Scripture, opens up to vast depths, which in a sense are 'a labyrinth of figures', Georges Didi-Hubermann writes that while every particle of Scripture may tell a biblical story, that story also 'figures Christ himself and the fullness of time, and also the everyday practice of every religious virtue'. Tracing its origin to Saint Paul's 'The letter killeth but the spirit bringeth life' (2 *Corinthians* 3:6), Didi-Hubermann describes this mode of exegesis as common throughout the Middle Ages, 'where every meaning in Scriptures *acquires depth by dividing*, splitting in two: the letter and the spirit, the surface and the underside'; *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration*, trans. J.M. Todd (London: 1995) 37. On Rubens's making visible of the mystery of the Incarnation in which all contradictions are resolved, see Haeger, "Rubens's *Rockox Triptych*" 128.

⁵² *Ephesians* 2:14–15. It demonstrates, as stated in 1 *Timothy* 2:5–6: 'For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself as redemption for all as the one mediator between God and man.'

⁵³ 1 *Corinthians* 15:22.

⁵⁴ The entire passage references Jewish rituals as signs of identity, but it is the final two verses that juxtapose the rituals of Old Testament with body of Christ. 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a festival day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ (*Colossians* 2:16–17).

⁵⁵ 1 *Corinthians* 15:21–25 and 56–57:21. For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. 22. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23. But every one in his own order: the first fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ, who have believed in his coming. 24. Afterwards the end, when he shall have delivered up

is only the latter that dwells at length on the transformation of the resurrected, describing various aspects of the incorruptible body that will rise in glory.⁵⁶ Moreover, the binary structure of this chapter corresponds to the exegetical mode that de Vos employs.⁵⁷ These features of de Vos's image, rooted in 1 *Corinthians* 15, are the ones that had the most significant impact on Rubens.

Although Rubens's Vienna painting [Fig. 2] most resembles de Vos's in appearance, it is the Columbus picture that foregrounds Christ's glorified body and adapts the latter's pictorial strategy, shaping it to initiate a process of visual exegesis that leads to self-reform as well as to the discovery of sacred truth. While de Vos's image shows Christ uniting the terrestrial and celestial realms through the life-giving properties of his flesh, Rubens's painting presents the viewer with the unveiling of the means of humanity's redemption, the Word made flesh. Instead of situating the image of the triumphant Christ within the narrative of his Passion, Rubens conflates *historia* and *imago*, resurrection and triumphant presence. He portrays the angel unveiling Christ's glorious body and with that action simultaneously signals the moment of resurrection and reveals Christ as visible presence. The cloth is both the shroud that marks the moment of transition – from life to death, from the era of the Law to the era of Grace – and a cloth of honor, like the one in an epitaph designed by Cornelis Floris [Fig. 8],⁵⁸ which underscores the visibility of timeless presence. The Incarnate Christ is revealed; the eternal mystery emerges from past history and the viewer encounters the image of the invisible God – a radiant figure majestically enthroned on an altar-like block, who gazes

the kingdom to God and the Father, when he shall have brought to nought all principality, and power, and virtue. 25. For he must reign, until he hath put all his enemies under his feet'; 56. Now the sting of death is sin: and the power of sin is the law. 57. But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

⁵⁶ See, for example, 1 *Corinthians* 15:42–43: 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power'.

⁵⁷ As indicated above, this mode of exegesis was a common one (note 51), and so the scriptural citation might have served as a prompt to engage with it. On the binary structure specifically of 1 *Corinthians* 15:47 and its use as an exegetical instrument leading to self-reformation, see: Melion W.S., "Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries", in Clifton J. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century* [exh. cat., Museum of Biblical Art, New York – Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta] (New York: 2009) 56–57, discussed below.

⁵⁸ Freedberg, "Rubens as a painter of epitaphs" fig. 17, note 81. The etching made by Lucas van Doetecum and Joannes van Doetecum I is part of a series printed in Antwerp by Hieronymus Cock in 1557, entitled *Veelderleij nieuwe inventien van antijckesche sepulturen* [...]. *Libro secundo*.



Fig. 8. Jan and Cornelis Floris, Etching, 306 × 205 mm in *Veelderleij nieuwe inventien van antijckesche sepulturen...* (Antwerp, Hieronymus Cock: 1557). The British Museum. Image © The British Museum.

into her eyes. The making present of Christ as the image of the invisible God in this manner, like the texts held up by saints Peter and Paul in De Vos's triptych, remind that the visible of the New supersedes the shadows and figures of the Old and the one sacrifice replaces the many and secures salvation.

The Visible Image

In order to support this last claim it is necessary to consider first the *Glorification of the Eucharist* [Fig. 9] in which Rubens explicitly makes this argument. The *modello* of ca. 1630–1635 was commissioned for the high altar of the church of the Shod Carmelites in Antwerp, which was dedicated to the Holy Sacrament.⁵⁹ The painting features Christ triumphant over Sin and Death. Placed in the center and vertically aligned with God the Father and the dove of the Holy Spirit, Christ is flanked on his right by Elijah and Melchizedek, Old Testament figures whose practices and experiences prefigure the Eucharist and on his left by St. Paul and St. Cyril of Alexandria who bore witness to and defended the Holy Sacrament.⁶⁰ Rubens's portrayal of Christ echoes that of Maarten de Vos in the central panel of the triptych for the Oude Voetboog [Fig. 5].⁶¹ Christ's pose is nearly identical as he stands triumphantly above Sin, Death, and the World and holds the labrum, the sign of his victory in his left hand. However, while de Vos shows Christ raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing, Rubens depicts him elevating the chalice and host. As Jean de la Croix

⁵⁹ Rubens did not execute the final painting, which was the work of Gerard Seghers. Liedtke, W., *Flemish Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 2 vols (New York: 1984) I 146; Liedtke (146) and Held date the *modello* to about 1630, while Freedberg suggests ca. 1627–1630; Freedberg, *Life of Christ after the Passion* 77; Held J., *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens* 2 vols (Princeton: 1980) I 531. However, Frans Baudouin, while not ruling out some activity on Rubens's part prior to 1632, argues that the archival evidence indicates a date no earlier than 1632 for the *modello* and concludes that it was executed between 1633 and 1635; Baudouin F., "Het door Rubens ontworpen hoogaltaar in de Kerk der Geschoeide Karmelieten te Antwerpen", *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België* 51, 1 (1991) 50–53.

⁶⁰ *Genesis* 14:18 and *I Kings* 19:16–18. All discussions of the iconography of the painting and its relevance to the Carmelite order rely on Croix J. de la, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie de Rubens et les Carmes", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 2 (1969) 185–191.

⁶¹ Freedberg, *Life of Christ after the Passion* 76. Freedberg notes the resemblance and states that Rubens almost certainly had de Vos's work in mind when he planned the altarpiece.



Fig. 9. Peter Paul Rubens, "The Glorification of the Eucharist", (ca. 1630–1632). Oil on wood, 71.1 × 48.3 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

notes, Christ is shown resurrected and alive and holding these objects to convey that the Eucharist is the Sacrament that brings life, and he cites Christ's words, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day' (*John* 6:55). That the Eucharist is the means by which the Christian triumphs over death and sin is thus evident.⁶²

The figures that flank Christ reinforce this essential meaning, while Elijah and St. Cyril of Alexandria additionally have particular significance for the Carmelites.⁶³ Elijah and Melchizedek are conventionally employed to prefigure the Holy Sacrament, evident in their depicted attributes, while saints Paul and Cyril appear as those who provided doctrinal support for the Church's interpretation of the Eucharist. The structure of the work, like the representation of Christ, thus recalls de Vos's painting where saints Peter and Paul frame Christ. While de Vos depicts the latter displaying explanatory texts, Rubens relies on the viewer to recall the relevant writings associated with each saint. St. Paul was one of the earliest to bear witness to the Eucharistic sacrifice, asking in 1 *Corinthians* 10:16, 'The chalice of benediction, *which we bless*, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?'⁶⁴ And in 1 *Corinthians* 11:23–25, he describes Christ's institution of the Eucharist, which concludes with his words,

Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. 25. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me.⁶⁵

While 1 *Corinthians* 10:16 unequivocally supports the doctrine of the Real Presence, the verses from chapter 11 reinforce what is visually evident in the painting. Christ, above whom are angels bearing instruments employed in the celebration of the Sacrament, raises the chalice and the Host to demonstrate that 'it is always He who offers himself and who is offered'.⁶⁶ That it is Christ who makes the offering, who is the priest, is attested to by St. Paul who repeatedly draws parallels between the priesthood of Christ

⁶² Croix, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie" 189.

⁶³ Ibidem 179–192.

⁶⁴ Ibidem 190; Freedberg, *The Life of Christ after the Passion* 76–77; Held, *The Oil Sketches* I 530; Liedtke, *Flemish Paintings* 147.

⁶⁵ Held, *The Oil Sketches* I 530.

⁶⁶ Liedtke (*Flemish Paintings* 147) translating and quoting Croix, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie" 189.

and that of Melchizedek in *Hebrews* chapters 5–7.⁶⁷ It should be noted that in the seventeenth century Paul was believed to be the author of *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.

Like St. Paul, St. Cyril of Alexandria defended the power of the Holy Sacrament in language that subsequently would be reiterated and proclaimed in the doctrines of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence.⁶⁸ Moreover, he articulated the orthodox position concerning the Eucharist when he condemned the Nestorian heresy, which denied the vivifying power of the Sacrament, at the Council of Ephesus.⁶⁹ Thus, his presence provides 'the final assertion of the power of the Eucharist – which is the main burden of the painting'.⁷⁰ Like Elijah, St. Cyril was considered to be a member of the august lineage of the Carmelite order and so his role at Ephesus also serves to underscore the order's devotion to the Eucharist and their opposition to heresy. Here it is important to note that at Ephesus St. Cyril unequivocally proclaimed the Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God in opposition to the Nestorians, who denied her status.⁷¹ Considering the Carmelites' particular veneration of the Virgin Mary, it is not surprising that those who mention St. Cyril's proclamation seek no further explanation for the presence of a sculpture of the Virgin and Child in the altar's framework.⁷² I would like to suggest, however, that St. Cyril's defense of the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God is an integral part of the program of the altarpiece as a whole.

Rubens designed not only the painting for the high altar, subsequently executed by Gerard Seghers, but also its architectural framework, which included sculptures by Hans van Mildert, Rubens's frequent collaborator.⁷³ When considered in relation to both the *modello* and St. Cyril's language, the presence of the sculpture of the Virgin and Child enthroned in the

⁶⁷ Croix, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie" 190; Freedberg *The Life of Christ after the Passion* 76–77.

⁶⁸ Schroeder, H.J. (trans.), *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis – London: 1960) 73, 144–146. On the currency of these doctrinal issues in Antwerp, see Lawrence, "Before the *Raising of the Cross*" 265–96.

⁶⁹ Croix, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie" 191.

⁷⁰ Freedberg, *The Life of Christ after the Passion* 77.

⁷¹ Croix, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie" 190–191.

⁷² Ibidem 179, 190; Held, *The Oil Sketches*, 530. The presence of such a sculpture is postulated by both De la Croix and Held but definitive evidence was lacking at the time that they wrote.

⁷³ Held, *The Oil Sketches*, 530; Baudouin, "Het door Rubens ontworpen hoogaltaar" 19–60, esp. 25–28.

apex of the altar's framework⁷⁴ can be shown to be part of a more fully developed argument regarding the significance of Christ's sacrifice and its re-presentation in the Mass.⁷⁵ Nestorius denied the power of the Sacrament because he saw in the Eucharist the flesh of Christ but not the vivifying Son of God incarnate.⁷⁶ In addition, although Nestorius did not deny the hypostatic union *per se*, his discussions of Christ's dual nature, like his attacks on those who employed the term *Theotokos*, led to confusion and were seen as tending to destroy the whole meaning of the Incarnation.⁷⁷ By enthroning the Virgin and Child in a niche at the apex of the altar framework, Rubens surely intended to portray Mary as co-redeemer. Moreover, her role in God's plan for humanity's salvation is indicated by her relationship with the painting below and suggests a richer program than previously recognized.

Rubens's portrayal of Christ completes the representation of the Trinity that is aligned with the sculpture of the Virgin, thus prompting the viewer to focus on the mystery of the Incarnation and God's plan for the salvation of humanity. Christ appears as both divine and human, having taken on the flesh of the Virgin to become mortal in order to defeat death. The objects that he holds show that he is both priest and sacrifice. Perceiving the cross and the chalice with the Host as equivalents, the viewer is reminded of the language employed by the Council of Trent, which states that the Mass is a representation of Christ's bloody sacrifice on the cross by which 'He redeemed and delivered us from *the power of darkness and translated us into his kingdom*'.⁷⁸ By placing the triumphant Christ between those exemplifying the Old Law and those explicating the doctrines of the New, Rubens reminds that with his blood Christ inaugurates the era of Grace. As St. Paul writes in the passage from 1 *Corinthians* 11:25 cited above, Christ proclaims, 'This chalice is the new testament in my blood'. By showing Christ elevating the chalice and host above Elijah and Melchizedek, Rubens underscores that on the cross Christ offered one sacrifice for all time, a sacrifice that supersedes those of the Old Testament.

⁷⁴ Baudouin, "Het door Rubens ontworpen hoogaltaar" 25 and 28, fig. 6.

⁷⁵ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* 144–145. The decree 'On the institution of the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass' issued by the Council of Trent describes the Holy Sacrament as a visible sign 'whereby that bloody sacrifice once to be accomplished on the cross might be represented'.

⁷⁶ Croix, "La Glorification de l'Eucharistie" 191.

⁷⁷ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10755a.htm>.

⁷⁸ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* 145. The phrase in italics is from *Colossians* 1:13.

Relevant here is St. Paul's comparison of the priesthood of Christ with that of Melchizedek in which he refers to the temple curtain that closed off the Holy of Holies and could only be entered by the high priest. St. Paul notes that Jesus, the high priest forever, has entered in even 'within the veil' and has gone as forerunner for us.⁷⁹ The significance of this phrasing and its relation to the Sacrament is explained in *Hebrews* 10:1–20, a text not yet mentioned in relation to this altarpiece but one that also considers Christ's triumph, his priesthood and sacrifice, and the contrast between the era of Law with that of Grace, wherein that which was previously hidden is revealed.

In *Hebrews* 10, St. Paul states that Christ making one sacrifice for sins forever sanctifies us for once and for all, adding that he will sit on the right hand of God and make his enemies a footstool (12–13). And he urges the reader to 'have confidence in entering in the holies by the blood of Christ; a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil of his flesh'.⁸⁰ Here St. Paul draws on the statements made in three of the gospels that when Christ gave up the ghost the veil of the temple was rent in two.⁸¹ The torn veil in the temple is included in a subsidiary scene marked by the letter C in the background of the engraving of the Crucifixion from Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*. Nadal's corresponding annotation indicates that the interior of the temple is no longer hidden,⁸² which underscores the important shift from the era of Law to the era of Grace, when God becomes visible.

In his commentary on *Hebrews* 10, Costerus focuses on the transition from Old to New and Christ's sacrifice. He explains that the reference to the new way that we enter through the blood of Christ and the veil of his flesh signifies that with his sacrifice Christ has opened heaven where he has gone before us to prepare the way. And he adds that the veil of his flesh cloaks his divinity.⁸³ It also makes God visible, and Costerus's language emphasizes images, clarity, and the vivid realization of that which was dark and obscure under the Law. This language is no doubt prompted by the beginning of the chapter, 'For the law having a shadow of the good

⁷⁹ *Hebrews* 6:19.

⁸⁰ *Hebrews* 10:19–20

⁸¹ *Mark* 15:38, *Matthew* 27:51, *Luke* 23:45.

⁸² Nadal states that the interior of the temple, no longer veiled, revealed what was previously always covered and veiled; Nadal, J., *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels, Volume 2: The Passion Narratives*, trans. F. Homan (Philadelphia: 2007) 267.

⁸³ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1614) 797.

things to come, not the very image of the things'.⁸⁴ Costerus compares God to an artist who begins with a dark figure, a design of what he will later paint clearly and with variety. So God in the beginning gave Moses the Law in which the future heavenly things were obscure and the Passion of Christ was represented by the slaughtering of beasts. However, the New Testament presents a clear and perfected image because in the Sacrifice of the Mass Christ himself is represented.⁸⁵ Costerus's comparison of God to an artist was by no means new and, indeed, St. Cyril of Alexandria had employed the same language in a much more fully developed discussion of the pictorial metaphor used to explain the relation of the Old Testament to the New.⁸⁶

The Incarnate Christ is the realization of the good things that are only foreshadowed in the Law, as is indicated in the *Glorification of the Eucharist*. Here he appears between the Old and the New, as the second person of the Trinity, linked to the Father by the dove of the Holy Spirit, and as the fruit of the Virgin's womb; he is true image. The Word takes on flesh – the divine becomes visible – in order to defeat death and free humanity from the law. The Incarnation of Christ was thus one of most powerful arguments for the justification of images and was repeatedly used as such by both post Tridentine Catholics and Church Fathers. It is also worth noting that, as Herbert Kessler has written, St. Cyril of Alexandria, referring to St. Paul's discussion of Moses having to hide the glory of the Lord beneath a veil in 2 *Corinthians* 3:7–18 explains that

the law had been instituted to display pagan error, but Christ who is 'the way and the door' allows the faithful to 'take off the veil of the law and, by setting the face of Moses free of its coverings, behold the naked truth' (Letter 41.8).⁸⁷ And John of Damascus, drawing on the same text, seized the *topos* to defend images: 'Israel of old did not see God', but we "all, with unveiled face, behold the glory of God."⁸⁷

The scholars who have interpreted the *Glorification of the Eucharist* have deployed the writings of St. Paul and St. Cyril of Alexandria to explain the significance of the pictorial argument that Rubens's audience would have understood. The same, I believe, can be said of my contribution. Certainly, the Carmelites would have perceived these implications of the

⁸⁴ *Hebrews* 10:1.

⁸⁵ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1614) 795.

⁸⁶ Kessler H., "Medieval Art as Argument", in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: 2000) 53–54.

⁸⁷ Kessler, "Medieval Art" 63.

work's pictorial structure in light of the additional writings of the two saints. Moreover, two other texts support my arguments. The scriptural source is *Colossians* 1:12–15 in which St. Paul connects the painting's theme with the visibility of Christ. Here he writes that we should give 'thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins; *Who is the image of the invisible God* [...]'. That verse 13 is quoted in the decree on the institution of the Sacrifice of the Mass is surely relevant.⁸⁸ The second source is particularly significant because it articulates the Church's understanding of the Eucharist written by Johannes David for the laity and so obviously was accessible in every sense of the word. Responding to questions regarding the body of Christ in the Sacrament, David explains that we receive the same Christ born of the Virgin, who sits in heaven on the right hand of God and who will come to judge us. The body of Christ, he adds, is the same body that hung on the cross, explaining, however, that 'it is the same but not as he was then because then he was mortal and now he is immortal and glorious'.⁸⁹ Rubens's depiction of Christ placed on axis with the sculpture of the Virgin and holding the cross in one hand and the chalice and host in the other clearly demonstrates that the believer receives the same body that took flesh in the womb of the Virgin and that hung on the cross. Moreover, his body, which was mortal, appears now to be glorious, beautifully proportioned and radiating light; unlike the figures and shadows of the Old Law, Christ is the perfected image.

The *Glorification of the Eucharist* presents Church doctrine and divine truth with great clarity, as is fitting for an altarpiece. Figures and forms are framed and aligned to make connections and prompt associations in order to establish the essential arguments. The visual structure is very markedly different from that of Rubens's Columbus painting (Fig. 1), which engages the same themes and draws on the same texts but adopts another kind of pictorial strategy, one suited to its particular agenda. A key feature of this strategy is the manipulation of the white cloth, which, like the temple curtain that it evokes, links *historia* and *imago*. An engraving

⁸⁸ The decree concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass issued by the Council of Trent in 1562; *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* 145.

⁸⁹ David, *Den Bloemhof der kerckelicker traditien ende cerimonien* 88; 'dat het den selven is; maer niet soo hy doen was: want doen was hy stervelick; nu is hy onstervelick ende glorieus'.

by Jan Sadeler the Elder of ca. 1600,⁹⁰ which along with *Hebrews* 10 and de Vos's image of 1580 (Fig. 7) may well have contributed to the genesis of Rubens's conception of the Columbus painting, includes the temple curtain in a structure in which image is aligned with narrative allusions to reveal the equivalence of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and in the Mass [fig. 10]. Framed by a series of representations relating to Christ's suffering and death is the image of the Virgin displaying the body of Christ in a setting not unrelated to Rubens's picture. The framework includes four pairs of figures, the seven archangels carrying instruments of the Passion, and three scenes that depict events that occurred when Christ gave up the ghost. The latter are emphasized by their placement above and below the central scene. The largest, a rendition of the temple veil torn in two and flanked by open graves from which the dead arise, appears beneath the *Pietà*, while the two smaller scenes depicting shattered rocks below the sun and moon cloaked in darkness are shown above. Inserted between these is an angel holding up the Veronica whose presence contributes both to the print's meaning and the structural coherence of the framework. These three scenes correspond to the events described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke – all of which note that at the moment that Christ gave up the ghost the veil of the temple was torn in two. Like Mark, Luke mentions both the rending of the veil and the darkness covering the earth, saying 'the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst'.⁹¹ Matthew's account is the source of the remaining features. 'And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent and the graves were opened [...]'.⁹²

In the center between these events is a slightly modified reverse copy of Hieronymus Wierix's *Pietà*, which shows the Virgin, flanked by two angels bearing tapers, holding up the body of Christ that rests on a stone resembling an altar.⁹³ As she looks heavenward, she presents the body of

⁹⁰ Knipping J.B., *Iconography of the Counter Reformation in the Netherlands*, 2 vols. (Nieuwkoop: 1974) 463. Glen T., "In the footsteps of Rubens: Van Dyck's *Lamentation* in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1991) 82.

⁹¹ *Luke* 23:45; *Mark* 15:38, 33.

⁹² *Matthew* 27:51–52.

⁹³ Repeatedly compared to Michelangelo's Florence *Pietà* due to the resemblance of the body of Christ to that work, Wierix's print is based on a composition by Taddeo Zucaro and dated before 1580 in Ruyven-Zeman Z. van, *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700: The Wierix Family, Part IV*, ed. J. van der Stock and M. Leesberg (Rotterdam: 2003) 72–73, no. 715. Wierix's engraving differs slightly from Sadeler's image; no sword pierces the Virgin's breast, the base on which Christ rests is still



Fig. 10. Jan Sadeler I, "Pietà surrounded by angels with instruments of the Passion", (1575–1600). Engraving, 298 × 221 mm. London, The British Museum.
Image © The British Museum.

Christ to the viewer, drawing attention to the display by holding back the shroud, which simultaneously frames his body and appears to underscore that he is the fruit of her womb, whom she clothed with her flesh. The Virgin is portrayed as Co-Redeemer; she appears here in the role of priest, as *Virgo Sacredos*, offering her son for the redemption of humanity. The image demonstrates that the sacrifice of the Mass is a re-presentation of Christ's bloody sacrifice on the cross, and its redeeming powers are underscored by the scene below where the dead are shown arising from their graves on either side of the temple curtain.

The Virgin's posture is echoed in that of the angel above her, who presents the *vera icon* to the viewer. Both tilt their heads and gaze heavenward, figuring a transition from the terrestrial to the celestial. However, the Virgin pulls back the cloth to reveal the body of Christ, while the angel holds a veil that bears the imprint of his face. The *vera icon* combines an image of miraculous origin with a touch relic and thus serves to attest to the dual nature of Christ, as is emphasized here by the halo that encompasses the head crowned with thorns. Moreover, the living gaze of the Holy Face above the sacrificial body reminds the viewer of Christ's promise to grant everlasting life to those who partake of his body.⁹⁴ In addition, the alignment of the opening in the temple curtain, the body of Christ, and the *vera icon* foregrounds the visibility that distinguishes the God of the Old Covenant and its sacrifices from those of the New, the Law having only the 'shadow of good things to come, not the very image of things'.⁹⁵ The viewer is prompted to see that it is the flesh of Christ that is the veil through which we enter the Holy of Holies and through which we encounter the invisible God. It is this flesh that both links Christ to man and that bears 'the life-giving impact of the invisible God'.⁹⁶ The juxtaposition of the temple curtain and the *vera icon* also draws attention to the paradox of the veil as that which conceals and reveals; like the flesh of Christ that makes him visible but conceals his godhead. Commenting on *Hebrews* 10, Costerus describes the temple curtain as heaven where

recognizable as the tomb, and the Virgin gazes upward toward a glowing light in the heavens; Glen, "In the footsteps of Rubens" fig. 3.

⁹⁴ *John* 6:55.

⁹⁵ *Hebrews* 10:1.

⁹⁶ Baert B., "He Must Increase but I Must Decrease: On the Spiritual and Pictorial Intertwining between the *Johannesschussel* and the *Vera Icon* (1200–1500)", in Enenkel K. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture* (Leiden: 2001) 334.

Christ has gone through his blood and the veil of his body, which covers his Godhead.⁹⁷

Sadeler employs the temple veil and the *vera icon* as a means of conveying doctrinal truth and sacred mystery and of contrasting the era of Law and that of Grace, which is inaugurated by Christ's sacrifice. Rubens does the same in the Columbus picture [Fig. 1] but instead of employing a diagrammatic structure adopts a dynamic one in which conflation is substituted for alignment. Here the face of Christ radiating light and framed by the cloth evokes the numerous images of the Sudarium held aloft by angels. The billowing cloth signals the restoration of life and marks the end of the bondage of the Law by disclosing the image of the invisible God, as described in *Colossians* 1:13–15, *who has delivered us from the powers of darkness*, in whom we have remission of sins.⁹⁸ While the works thus far considered have juxtaposed and aligned figures and scenes to prompt the viewer to perceive the significance of what is portrayed, Rubens stages an encounter in which the act of unveiling not only allows the beholder to see, but makes him aware that he is being given to see and to see from a particular place. The veil is being lifted before his eyes, and he confronts the radiant body and face of the glorified Christ from across the threshold. He is made aware of his distance yet brought near as he gazes upon the face of Christ. This construction not only puts into play the binaries of near and far, thus triggering the exegetical process but sets up a mirror-like relation between the beholder and Christ who confront one another across the divide.

The Columbus picture, like Sadeler's engraving after de Vos [Fig. 7], encourages the viewer to see his own future resurrection in Christ's rising victorious over sin and death. However, the reciprocal viewing constructed by the painting stimulates further associations, one of which is to underscore that the ability to see God is a result of Christ's victory over sin and death that makes void the power of the law. As indicated above, this truth is presented in 2 *Corinthians* 3. The chapter differentiates those who live under the New Testament from the Israelites. While the former behold 'the glory of the Lord with open face', the latter could not look upon it, and so Moses had to shield them with the veil that he placed over his countenance. However, the veil that obscures their vision and

⁹⁷ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1614) 795.

⁹⁸ *Colossians* 1:13–15. The italicized phrase from verse 13 is included in italics in the doctrine concerning the institution of the Sacrifice of the Mass issued by the Council of Trent in 1562; *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* 145.

understanding will be removed once they turn to the Lord.⁹⁹ In his commentary on this chapter, Costerus expounds on the differences between the old and the new law and on the veil. He emphasizes repeatedly that the light of truth that is clearly revealed in the Gospels cannot be seen in the Old Testament where it is obscured beneath a veil, like that with which Moses covered his radiant face. Scripture is not clear to all, and Jesus Christ cannot be found there unless one converts. Through faith, he writes, we Christians see the glory of God, and recognize Christ's divinity, his deeds and mysteries in God's word as clearly as if we saw in a mirror. Because here we see that he is God and that he has fulfilled what his Father commanded.¹⁰⁰ He has freed man from the Law that brought only knowledge but no means of fulfilling its commandments. The Gospels, however, bring grace, not only knowledge but help.¹⁰¹

Costerus's last statement is contained in his explication of verse 6: 'For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth'. This verse appears at the top of Lieven de Witte's title page for Willem van Branteghem's *Iesu Christi vita* [...] printed in 1537, which draws on 2 *Corinthians* 3 to distinguish the era of Law from that of Grace as presented in two scenes.¹⁰² At the left, Moses, his glowing face covered with a veil, brings the Law to the Israelites who shield their eyes, while at the right, the apostles bring salvific grace. They stand beneath the shining dove of the Holy Spirit and present the *vera icon*, the true image. The Holy Face, emitting a divine radiance, appears on a cloth that is inscribed with the words, 'And when they have turned to the Lord the veil will be lifted' ('Ubi conversi fuerint ad Dominum tolletur velamen').¹⁰³ Unlike the Israelites, the Christian faithful behold the glory of God and, imbued by the Holy Spirit, are transformed, as their luminous halos reveal. Dividing the two scenes are the words of the title containing the life, deeds and doctrine of Christ, which 'demarcate the threshold between these dispensations'.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ 2 *Corinthians* 3:13–18.

¹⁰⁰ 'Wy Christenen aenschouwen door 't gheloove de glorie Godts/ te weten/ Christi Godtheyt/ende sijne verdiensten ende mysterien in Godt's woort/ soo klaerlick/ oft wy 't in eenen spiegel sagen; want daer sien wy merckelick/ dat hy Godt is/ en dat hy volbrocht heeft al wat hem van den hemelschen Vader bevolen was; Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 612.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem 611.

¹⁰² Melion W.S. – Brusati C. – Enenkel K., "Introduction: Scriptural Authority in Word and Image", in Melion W.S. – Brusati C. – Enkel K. (eds.) *The Authority of the Word: Reflecting on Image and Text in Northern Europe, 1400–1700* (Leiden: 2012) 3.

¹⁰³ Ibidem 5. This is a paraphrase of 2 *Corinthians* 3:16.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem.

Rubens's Columbus picture also presents Christ's life and deeds, his resurrection and triumph over sin, which makes void the old and inaugurates the new. However, here text has been replaced by image and the unveiling of the Word made flesh makes present the 'image of the invisible God'. It thus enacts the demarcation of the threshold and evokes the rending of the temple curtain, the veil of Christ's flesh through which heaven is opened. Moreover, Rubens's painting, which represents Christ beyond entrance of the cavernous space where he is enthroned, is conceived as a threshold. It prompts the viewer to exegesis, to explore that which lies beyond the surface, an exegetical mode described by Didi-Huberman. Scripture, he writes, as commonly examined, acquires depth by dividing. The surface is the *historia* but, as Aquinas notes, the facts of the story are already endowed with spiritual meaning. Consequently,

the biblical *historia* is less surface than a *threshold* we must cross over to go 'inside' Scripture. It has been compared to the *limen templi*, the temple door, which hides but also gives access to what we could call the Holy of Holies in the Scriptural sense.¹⁰⁵

The Columbus picture, which discloses the mystery of the Incarnate Christ, in whom all contradictions are reconciled, functions as a threshold. It reveals the eternal truth that lies beyond the surface and constructs a threshold that makes the viewer acutely aware of her embodied viewing of Christ and hence her relation to him.

The life-sized figure of Christ is situated within a space that is articulated so that the beholder is placed beyond the threshold marked by the repoussoir in the lower left and views Christ from across a divide. This structure reminds the viewer of humanity's fallen state and its existence in a region of dissemblance since the Fall. Before the Fall, Adam was the image of God and lived in a relation of resemblance and obedience to him that was one of 'face to face', but that image was lost thereafter, and so humanity exists in a state described in metaphors of blindness and tarnished surfaces.¹⁰⁶ While in Paradise, Adam could still look directly at God, an ability lost to his progeny.¹⁰⁷ In order to return to that relation of being face to face, to the resemblance of obedience and imitation, one

¹⁰⁵ Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico* 38–39. He adds, 'the story is a threshold, even a foundation, but it is a foundation that must be left behind and thus, in a certain sense, denied: to arrive at the meaning of Scripture, we must begin with, but depart from, the story'.

¹⁰⁶ Didi-Hubermann, *Fra Angelico* 46–47.

¹⁰⁷ Kessler H., "The Icon in the Narrative", in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: 2000) 26.

must reform. St. Augustine describes the experience of discovering that he was far from God, who made him aware that there was a Being to be seen, but he was not yet worthy to see it.¹⁰⁸ The structure of the Columbus picture creates a similar experience. We see that the Word becomes flesh – the divine becomes visible – in order to defeat death and free us from the Law. But we are also made aware of our distance and hence our need to reform, of our need to conform to the image we see.

Conformity and Transformation

Our relation to the Christ is discussed by Costerus in related terms in his commentary on *John* 1:12–18. He writes that the evangelist says the Word became flesh, not the Word became man, because he wished to emphasize that the creator took our nature so that the children of man could become the children of God. And he explains that Christ, who brings truth and grace, as John states, also brings knowledge and strength to fulfill God's commandments, and he stresses that with faith comes the power to learn to achieve forgiveness of sins.¹⁰⁹ While the scriptural texts cited thus far encourage us to see our salvation in Christ's victory and resurrection, they themselves or at least the commentaries on them also indicate that one must participate in one's reformation. Nadal makes this explicit in his meditation on Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death. He writes that Christ rose from death by divine power and that we rise from a life of sin to a life of grace by the same power. And he states: 'When you teach us the true meaning of your resurrection we know we die and are made dead to sin as we turn from it and do deep and willing penance'.¹¹⁰ Nadal continues to address Christ stating that we have faith that 'we can put on immortality with You and through You in heaven'. 'We were in Hell, You in Paradise and eternal glory!' 'And although we were here and You there; still You had our nature'.¹¹¹ The text continues to exclaim on the nothingness of the speaker without Christ and on the life-giving properties of Christ's Passion and resurrection, which liberates humanity from the prison of death. It celebrates the impact of Christ's resurrection as a result of which the speaker is empowered. 'We walk in the newness of

¹⁰⁸ Didi-Hubermann, *Fra Angelico* 46.

¹⁰⁹ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 266–268.

¹¹⁰ Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels* [...] *The Resurrection* 40.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*.

life and vitality in You. We do good works in and through You. We get life from You to live in You and to work eternal life'. The Columbus painting establishes a similar relationship between the viewer and Christ.

The veil, as we have seen, is ambiguous and thereby triggers the exegetical process. It is both suspended to foreground the visibility of Christ and make him present, and being removed, like a shroud, to signal the transition from death to life, from the era of Law to that of Grace. It also evokes the assumption of a new body by appearing as a radiant white robe. In his discussion of the resurrection, Nadal writes that Christ's soul returns to his body, becoming united as it was before. However, the previous union was with a body that was vulnerable and mortal, and this new union makes his body impassible and immortal.¹¹² Reading the veil as a new garment being bestowed evokes the language that the meditator uses: 'we can put on immortality in you and through you in heaven'.¹¹³ And St. Paul uses similar language in 1 *Corinthians* 15,¹¹⁴ a chapter of the utmost relevance to this discussion. In verse 47 we find stated 'The first man being terrestrial is from the earth; the second, being celestial, is from heaven'.¹¹⁵ The binary character of this text has served as model for my exegesis of the image. As Walter Melion writes in another context, it 'implies that every image will be read in a binary way – externally and internally, humanly and divinely, temporally and eternally – that transforms the reader-viewer accordingly'.¹¹⁶ It is in this text that we also find combined the statements of resurrection, victory over death, freedom from the bondage of the law, the dual nature of Christ, and the promise of our own resurrection. In his explication of the New Testament, Costerus provides an extensive commentary on this chapter.¹¹⁷ He repeatedly links our resurrection to Christ's and stresses that resurrection means resurrection of the body. Of particular importance are the verses partially cited in the engraving of Maarten de Vos's depiction of Christ triumphant over sin and death seen earlier. 1 *Corinthians* 15:21–22 states: 'For since by man came death, by

¹¹² Ibidem III 38.

¹¹³ Ibidem III 40.

¹¹⁴ 1 *Corinthians* 15:53: 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality'.

¹¹⁵ Melion, "Bible Illustration" 57.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹¹⁷ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1614) 597–603. Among other things, he elaborates upon Christ's victory over death, stating that it is the last victory following those over sin, the devil and the world. Man, he adds, is freed from the bondage of sin and the Law and from the fear of hell.

man came also resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' And St. Paul continues, stating that one man is of the earth and the second is our Lord from heaven and in verse 49 promising: 'And as we have born the image of the earthly so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly'. According to Costerus, this means that the mortal body will be changed into a glorious, bright, incorruptible body, one that reflects the glorious body of Christ. Here Costerus appears to be recalling St. Paul's statement in 2 *Corinthians* 3:18: 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord'.

In his commentary on that text, Costerus explains that one is inwardly transformed through faith, 'becoming like Christ' by receiving the brightness of Grace in one's soul. The justified receive this brightness so that they are not always dark, impure and full of sin.¹¹⁸ The verses that precede 2 *Corinthians* 3:18 emphasize the need to convert: 'But when they shall be converted to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is a Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty'.¹¹⁹ According to Costerus, there is liberty because the Holy Spirit frees man from the veil so that he can clearly behold the truth of the Gospels, which he explicitly connects with the knowledge that we are freed from the sacrifices and figures of the old Law.¹²⁰ However, freedom from the law does not mean that we are redeemed by grace alone. Man has free will. He is inclined to bad, Costerus avers, and God's grace helps to lead man's will to good without destroying it.¹²¹

The need to reform and to cooperate with grace is repeatedly reiterated elsewhere by Costerus and by the eminent Jesuit scholar Cornelis à Lapide. In his commentary on 1 *Corinthians* 15 he asserts that grace arouses and assists endeavor.¹²² He quotes St. Augustine's statement that 'if you were not a worker God could not be a co-worker'.¹²³ 'Moreover, the resurrection of Christ was patterned on ours, i.e., of our resurrection to righteousness in this life, and to glory in the next'.¹²⁴ Clearly the faithful, perceiving Christ as the perfected image, should strive to transform the

¹¹⁸ 'wesende Christi ghelijck'; Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 612.

¹¹⁹ 2 *Corinthians* 3:16–17.

¹²⁰ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 612.

¹²¹ *Ibidem* 610.

¹²² Lapide Cornelis à, *The Great Commentary of Cornelis à Lapide*, trans. W.F. Cobb, 8 vols. (Edinburgh: 1908) VII 368–70.

¹²³ *Ibidem* 370.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem* 371.

imago Dei within to achieve a relationship of resemblance of obedience and imitation. That we can conform to Christ is asserted by Lape in his commentary on 2 *Corinthians* 3:18 where he states 'God foreknew and predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son'.¹²⁵ This follows a long explication of verse 18 in which Lape deploys the metaphor of the mirror to consider how we when 'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord'. Here he asserts that the Greek word is clearly 'to see' and not 'to represent as in a mirror' as Erasmus wrote. He explains that it is the next phrase – 'are changed into the same image' – that speaks of representation. Seeing the glory of God in Christ and his Gospel as if in a mirror, we represent in ourselves this glory and are transformed into the same image. St. Paul, he adds, 'means by mirror the Word clothed in flesh and made visible', which is evident in the next chapter where the apostle

speaks of the *image of God* for Christ as God is the Word and the image of the Father, as Man he is the mirror of the Deity and His grace and glory, consequently the gospel of Christ is nothing but a most clearly polished mirror of the glory of God.¹²⁶

We, too, are mirrors in this account. We are changed by

the rays of light of Christ being reflected on us from a mirror, we become bright with the light of faith and the grace of Christ, and so we become like mirrors flashing out the light of heaven and like suns illuminating others...¹²⁷

I have dwelt at such length on the metaphor of the mirror because I believe that Rubens intentionally evokes it in the way he structures the beholder's viewing experience and engagement with the image. Moreover, in the course of his discussion of the mirror, Lape cites 1 *Corinthians* 13:12, 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner then face to face. Now I know in part but then I shall know even as I am known'. This verse evokes the end of time when the saved shall sit in the presence of God and see him face to face, as described in *Revelation* 22:4–5:

¹²⁵ Lape, *The Great Commentary* VIII 38.

¹²⁶ Ibidem 37.

¹²⁷ Ibidem 38. It is not without interest that in his title-page for Branteghem's *Iesu Christi vita*, Lieven de Witte shows the apostles who present the Holy Face and those who behold it mirroring Christ's conspicuous aureole of blazing light.

And they shall see his face: and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more: and they shall not need the light of the lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Costerus elaborates on these verses and explains that the blessed shall serve God and Christ and always do God's will. They shall see God's face and live with him forever, and they shall demonstrate through their great glory that they are God's children and that they shall nevermore be in shadow but in God's brightness, which is greater than the sun or any light.¹²⁸ Both Costerus and Lapede speak of the beatific vision as being enjoyed by both the soul and the body; both are transformed by resurrection, as discussed at length in 1 *Corinthians* 15.¹²⁹ Considering Rubens's painting in light of these texts adds yet another dimension to the experience of viewing the glorious body of the resurrected Christ from across the threshold, one that is particularly relevant considering the work's likely function as an epitaph.

It is this experiential component of the Columbus picture that makes it so effective as an image of exegesis and self-reform and as an epitaph. Like the Veronica, to which it is not unrelated, the painting presents us with the image of the divine in which we see ourselves reflected. We are made acutely aware of our act of viewing not only by the directness of Christ's gaze but by the rocks that frame the mouth of the cave. We are at once brought close but remain at a distance. Christ is present but removed; *imago* and *historia* are combined. As has been said of representations of the Holy Face, the Columbus picture confirms the past, serves the present, and offers a glimpse of the future.¹³⁰ It is thus ideally suited to its function as an epitaph.

¹²⁸ Costerus, *Het Nieu Testament* (1594) 958.

¹²⁹ Ibidem; Lapede, *The Great Commentary* VII 373.

¹³⁰ Kessler H. – Wolf G., "Introduction", in Kessler H. – Wolf G., (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Villa Spelman Colloquia 6 (Florence: 1996) x.

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